

November 27, 2000

To: The Campus Community

From: Chancellor Greenwood

Re: Death of Professor Emeritus Ronald W. Henderson

Dear Campus Colleagues:

It is with great sadness and a sense of personal loss that I report the death of Professor Emeritus Ronald W. Henderson. Ron died on Friday, November 24. A celebration of his life is planned for Saturday, December 2.

Copied below is the body of a news release announcing Ron's passing and noting a few of the highlights of his illustrious career. The last paragraph also provides the details of the celebration of his life planned for this coming Saturday.

I had the privilege of working with Ron in his most recent campus role as Dean of Graduate Studies, and I witnessed firsthand his dedication and hard work. Ron's commitment to the goal of making a positive difference in the lives of students--both those he taught and those who benefited from the results of his research--shines as a model for us all.

Please pause with me for a moment's reflection in memory of our colleague Ron Henderson and join me in conveying heartfelt sympathy to his wife Lea, his other family, and many friends.

Sincerely,

M.R.C. Greenwood
Chancellor

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Ronald W. Henderson, a professor emeritus of education and psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, whose research focused on improving educational opportunities for underrepresented minorities, died at his Santa Cruz home November 24, after a lengthy battle with melanoma. He was 67.

Henderson's dual academic interests in child development and education fueled his research on social and cultural influences on development, academic motivation, cognition, and mathematics and science education. His specific research interest was in the development of instructional approaches that would increase achievement and participation in mathematics by Latino students, women, and other groups that are underrepresented in math and the sciences. He specialized in the development of motivation to achieve and participate in mathematics.

"Ron did a great deal of work in the schools that focused on the needs of underrepresented students," said close friend Edward Landesman

, a professor emeritus of mathematics who collaborated with Henderson on numerous projects in Watsonville schools. "He had a strong desire to make sure those children were successfully prepared for higher education and careers."

Henderson joined the UCSC faculty in 1977 and made numerous contributions to the campus during his tenure. He was named provost of Crown College in 1989 and served until 1993. He was a charter faculty member of UCSC's Bilingual Research Group and was active in the Monterey Bay Area Mathematics Project administered by UCSC. He served as chair of the UCSC Academic Senate from 1986 to 1988 and served on the senate's Academic Personnel Committee and the Committee on Planning and Budget. Henderson retired in 1994 but returned to campus on a part-time basis in 1995 to serve as dean of the Division of Graduate Studies. His illness, which had been diagnosed in 1995, forced him to retire in 1999.

Henderson was an early advocate of educational collaborations and considered his greatest professional contribution his work with numerous local and regional elementary and high schools, especially in Watsonville and Salinas. Such collaborations are recognized today as valuable enhancements to both K-12 education and university research, but Henderson took the initiative for UCSC in facilitating school partnerships.

Early in his career, Henderson concluded that a child's learning environment is a much stronger influence than socioeconomic status in developing intellectual competence. Henderson devised the Henderson Environmental Learning Process Scale (HELPS) to measure the characteristics of home environments. His early research revealed that the majority of variance in intellectual performance among Mexican American and Anglo-American first graders could be accounted for by two factors: How much the parents valued language and school-related behavior, and the degree to which they provided a supportive environment for school learning.

In research based on their work with predominantly Latino students on the Central Coast, Henderson and

Landesman

described the complex interrelationship of factors that contribute to student academic achievement in mathematics, including the student's own motivation, his or her approach to tasks, home influences, and the nature of classroom instruction. Motivating children to study math will require a broad-based partnership among educators, business leaders, and community members, they advised.

Henderson and

Landesman's

highly regarded work received several grants from the National Science Foundation and the California Academic Partnership Program. Reflecting his early interest in school partnerships, Henderson in 1985 was named chair of a new committee charged with developing policy for the campus's outreach to schools. He described his goal at the time

to "try to encourage faculty to work with schools in any variety of ways which could result in an improvement in the K-12 system."

Henderson, who was born January 20, 1933, in Pocatello, Idaho, to the late Wilber T. Henderson and Delta Mae Howell-Henderson, received a doctorate in education from the University of Arizona, where he was a professor of educational psychology and coordinator of the Office of Child Research at the Arizona Center for Educational Research and Development before coming to UCSC. He was an assistant professor of education at the University of Oregon from 1966 to 1967. He earned a bachelor's degree in anthropology from Sacramento State College (now California State University, Sacramento).

Henderson served in the United States Air Force from 1951 to 1955, including overseas service in Japan, the Philippine Islands, and Vietnam. He remained on Active Reserve status in the U.S. Air Force until 1960.

Henderson is survived by his wife of 41 years, Miriam
Leatrice

Peterson Henderson; his daughter Paige and her husband Mark of Lathrop, CA; his son Tom and his wife Jill of Alamo, CA; his daughter Holly and her husband Adrian of Santa Cruz; and six grandchildren: Amanda Nichole, Richard Joseph, Michael Lee, Maya Rose, Ryan Thomas, and Kevin Ronald.

Family and friends are invited to join in a celebration of Ron
Henderson's life at the family residence, 289

Meder

Street, in Santa Cruz, on Saturday, December 2, at 1 p.m.

Contributions may be made to Special Olympics Northern California,
3480

Buskirk

Avenue, #340, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523; or Hospice Caring Project of Santa Cruz County, P.O. Box 670, Aptos, CA 95001.

Ronald W. Henderson January 20, 1933- Nov. 24, 2000



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"Ron did a great deal of work in the schools that focused on the needs of underrepresented students," said close friend Edward Landesman, a professor emeritus of mathematics who collaborated with Henderson on numerous projects in Watsonville schools. "He had a strong desire to make sure those children were successfully prepared for higher education and careers."

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