



## IN MEMORIAM

John Itsuro Kitsuse  
Professor of Sociology, Emeritus  
Santa Cruz  
1923—2003

John Kitsuse, a professor emeritus at University of California, Santa Cruz, passed away on November 27, 2003, in Santa Cruz, California, after suffering a massive stroke. He was one of the premier contributors to the social constructionist movement which definitively changed the way sociologists approached the study of social problems, normality, deviance, and control, and has been deeply influential in cultural studies and other areas of scholarship. He was a man of elegant contradictions, as fiercely committed to the “underdog” as to the display of personal grace in his own life, which he achieved with unflinching dignity.

John was born in Imperial Valley, California. His family moved to Los Angeles when he was a child. In 1942, John, along with thousands of other Japanese Americans, was imprisoned in an internment camp. After a year, he was helped by friends and moved to Boston where he attended Boston University, earning his B.A. He then attended the University of California, Los Angeles for his M.A. and Ph.D.

John Kitsuse was also the most well-known and most respected American sociologist in Japan in the fields of social problems, criminology, and deviance. He traveled to Japan 40 years ago as a Fulbright scholar. He studied the method of prisoner rehabilitation, *naikan*, which required inmates to reflect on the shame their actions had brought to family and loved ones and introduced this method to American scholars.

John was a professor of sociology at Northwestern University for 16 years before moving to UCSC in 1974. At that time, the Sociology Department was growing. His distinctive outlook on social interaction and his own irrepressible sociability were the heart and soul of departmental life for students and close faculty colleagues. His network of professional and personal contacts brought a cosmopolitanism to Santa Cruz that helped the undergraduate and graduate programs to mature and prosper. His consolidation of constructionist perspectives enhanced the distinctive mix of sociological viewpoints at UCSC, but it was just as much his intellectual and interpersonal vitality that left their mark on those who knew him.

John left a deep impression on many dear friends, faculty, and students. He was a wonderful host and cook as well as colleague. He is survived by his wife Kathy, his son Edward, and his daughter Alicia.

Craig Reinerman  
Mark Traugott  
Hiroshi Fukurai  
Aaron Cicourel