

**Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison
on the Death of Professor Emeritus Anatole Beck**

Anatole Beck was born on March 19, 1930 to Morris and Minnie (Rosenblum) Beck in New York City, and died on December 21, 2014 in Madison. He is survived by his wife Eve Siegel Beck, his brother Bernard Beck, his daughter Nina Rachel Beck, his son Micah Daniel Beck, his step daughters Amy Novick and Pam Novick, Nina's spouse Stacy Jolles, their son Seth Jolles, Micah's spouse Rebecca Rukeyser, Rebecca's children Michelle, Chrissy, Ian, and their foster daughter Jane, Michah's son Sam Walker Beck, Sam's wife Louise Beck, Amy's husband Matthew Hallaron, Pam's husband RJ Prativahti, Anatole's granddaughter Adiarra Wright Beck, Adiarra's husband Tidiani Cissoko, and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by a grandson, Noah Jolles.

Anatole received his undergraduate education at Brooklyn College and his M.A. and PhD. Degrees from Yale under the direction of Shizuo Kakutani. He spent most of his career in our Mathematics department, but also had visiting or semi-permanent positions at Tulane, Hebrew University, the London School of Economics (where he chaired the math department for several years), Cornell, Göttingen, Warwick and at least half a dozen other institutions. At UW-Madison he had seven successful PhD. students. Anatole was a demanding instructor. For many years he coached the Putnam Exam team for the department. He was also one of several organizers of the highly successful Wisconsin Mathematics Talent Search program which recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.

His research covered many diverse topics, including Banach space valued random variables, topological dynamics, game theory and operations research. He authored or co-authored more than 50 papers between 1956 and 2000. His book, Continuous Flows in the Plane, was described by the Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society as the complete book as of 1975 on the subject.

The book, Excursions in Mathematics, (written jointly with Don Crowe and Mike Bleicher) is a fascinating book aimed at non-mathematicians. It was first published in 1969 and recently republished, an indication of its continuing relevance. His more recent works dealt with economics, law, and social policy.

He was well known for his role in faculty governance, serving on the University Committee and extensively in the UW Faculty Senate. He was a virtual magnet for employment situations where due process appeared flawed or even ignored. He advocated fiercely and was centrally involved in a number of cases where faculty tenure was denied improperly. As a senator, with great tenacity, he was able to convince the UW to alter the manner in which Income Continuation Insurance was offered to employees. In the 1960s Anatole's vocal opposition to the Viet Nam War put him at odds with many in the campus community and within the state. Sadly for him these conflicts filtered down into the department that he loved. During this turmoil, Anatole was one of the founders of the United Faculty a group opposed to the Viet Nam War. He was always a trade unionist and in the 70s he went along with United Faculty as it merged with already existing AFT 223 becoming the United Faculty and Academic Staff, UFAS, affiliated with the American and Wisconsin Federations of Teachers. For many years he fought valiantly to make collective bargaining a possibility for faculty should they choose to vote for it. In the 90s he was one of the founders of the Wisconsin University Union, WUU, an organization advocating due process and governance rights for UW Madison faculty and staff. Both UFAS and WUU are still functioning organizations.

The Dylan Thomas poem, *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night*, typifies Anatole. Here follows a posthumous letter to the Faculty Senate written in 1983 to be read at the time of his death:

2 Aug 1983

My dear colleagues,

Many is the time when I have stood in the Faculty Senate to hear a final tribute to a late Professor Emeritus, usually a total stranger to me, and to hear the praise, sometimes fabricated, written by the Memorial Committee. In recent years, my thoughts on these occasions has turned from the dead to the living, to our many retired colleagues for whom the condition of the pensioner is unwelcome and burdensome.

It is no news that many of our colleagues put down their professorial duties only by compulsion, and that the status of retiree is a threat to their health and even their lives. I have sought, on behalf of those who need the continued attachment to the University, for a minimal level of appointment which would allow them to keep their retired status while holding on to the main thread of their lives: teaching and research.

It is amazing and depressing how hard it has been to get this principle accepted by the Faculty; the refusal of the Administration has been even more adamant. I have proposed that each of our retired colleagues be offered the possibility of teaching one course each Fall semester at a rate far below their last earnings level, and just enough higher than the minimum salary paid to the least qualified temporary lecturers to allow our emeriti to retain some dignity in the appointment. After much campaigning, I succeeded in obtaining departmental approval. The Dean, however, refused this humane move in order to save the difference between a minimal decent honorarium and the lowest wage imaginable at the University. For a few thousand dollars, he has sentenced our friends to continued alienation and despair. When death finally overtakes these old professors, a final tribute is concocted, sometimes out of whole cloth, to be read to impatient strangers. I suggest to you that some compassionate help in the twilight years is far more important to our colleagues than fulsome praise after death.

If I could have a monument it would be recognition of the right of our retired colleagues to participate in the University at a minimal level if they need the connection and the attachment, if it costs a few thousand dollars more than the cheapest and least qualified teachers, it is money well spent. Many of you will some day need this kind of connection to keep you in life; adopt it now for your emeriti.

But if you will not grant this help to your colleagues in life, then you should know that overblown tributes after death are not only worthless, but even a mockery of the mercy you have refused them when they needed it most.

Anatole Beck

Respectfully submitted by the Memorial Committee:

Joel Robbin
Steven Bauman
Michael Bleicher