

# In Memoriam

## Richard F. Hamilton

The Mershon Center for International Security Studies mourns the passing of longstanding research associate Richard F. Hamilton (January 18, 1930–June 15, 2022). A sociologist of mass politics, Hamilton delighted in debunking received opinion through empirical investigation. His best-known and widely cited book, *Who Voted For Hitler?* (Princeton 1982), challenged the assumption that Nazi Party support came largely from the lower middle classes. Through a granular analysis of municipal voting records, Hamilton discovered disproportionate support among wealthy and upper-middle urban voters, variability across rural districts, and division among working class voters; these differences he accounted for by weighting district outcomes against information sources and local party activities. The book's ongoing relevance won recent endorsement in a surprising venue: in 2021, Dan Simon of *The Nation* wrote a [lengthy appreciation](https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/trump-hitler-nazi-fascism/) (https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/trump-hitler-nazi-fascism/) treating Hamilton's commitment to impartial, nuanced assessment of the evidence as a model for progressives tempted to stereotype the Trump voter.

Professor of Sociology at the Ohio State University from 1986 to his retirement in 1998, Hamilton was named a University Distinguished Scholar in 1993. He published fifteen books and a wide range of scholarly and general-audience articles on electoral behavior, the logics of mass society, the role of elites in the origins of the First World War, the question of American empire, and historical patterns in education.

Hamilton explained his scholarly ethos as the product of his

generation: the experience of wartime in early adolescence; the example of the GI Bill students during his undergraduate years at the Universities of Michigan and Chicago; and the extraordinary concentration of exile scholars that was reshaping American social science as he entered his doctoral program at Columbia. In a talk given at the Mershon Center to open the conference of the Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP) in 2005, Hamilton revisited his formative experience as a research assistant on Paul Lazarsfeld's Elmira Project, a pioneering Columbia study of opinion formation in the US national election of 1948. Explaining the Elmira Project as the precursor both of his own case studies and the large-scale, multinational, ongoing surveys of the CNEP (<https://u.osu.edu/cnep/>), Hamilton defended the value of models built up from the ground of empirical research against the elegant over-generalizations of grand theory. This brief retrospective, linked [here](https://academic.oup.com/book/27096/chapter/196446342) (https://academic.oup.com/book/27096/chapter/196446342), might also be taken as Richard's credo.

Richard was a faithful presence in Mershon's old building on Neil Ave., where, in the intervals of writing, he kept the plants of the atrium watered, apprised us of the birthdays of presidents and composers, posted quirky notices on the bulletin board, and could occasionally be heard humming operatic passages in a fine tenor voice. He is survived by Irene Wagner Hamilton, his wife of 64 years, with whom he shared a deep love of music and German culture, as well as two sons, Carl and Tilman (Cynthia); three grandchildren, Rhys, Devon and Cormick; and Howard, his younger brother.

—Paul A. Beck, Richard Gunther, & Dorothy Noyes,  
The Ohio State University

## Stephen L. Schechter

Stephen L. Schechter (1945–2022) passed away from cancer on July 18, 2022, at age 76. He was Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Russell Sage College, Troy, New York, where he taught from 1978 to 2020. He received the college's Consistent Outstanding Service Award in 2018.

Schechter earned his PhD from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs in 1972 before serving as Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science and Urban Studies at Temple University (1972–1976), where he directed international programs for the Center for the Study of Federalism. He then served as Assistant Professor of Political Science at the State University of New York at Albany from 1976 to 1977.

As a long-time fellow and, in recent years, vice president of the Center for the Study of Federalism (<https://federalism.org/>), Stephen was an invaluable colleague who established a considerable institutional legacy. He participated in launching *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, founded *Publius' Annual Review of American Federalism*, edited it from 1977 to 1984, and coedited the 1985 issue. Called "The State of American Federalism," the annual review was intended to reach an educated lay audience in addition to scholars and to show how the perspective of federalism provides a helpful way to understand and interpret current political issues in the Ameri-

can governmental system.

In 1977, Stephen was a co-founder of the International Association of Centers for Federal Studies (<https://iacfs.org/>). In 1983, he co-founded the Section on Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations of the American Political Science Association—the association's first such section (<https://connect.apsanet.org/groups/federalism-and-intergovernmental-relations/>).

On leave from Russell Sage College, he served as executive director (1986–1990) of the New York State Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution. The commission produced more publications and education materials than any other state commission. Edited books included *Well Begun: Chronicles of the Early National Period* (New York Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution 1989), *Roots of the Republic: American Founding Documents Interpreted* (Madison House 1990), and *Contexts of the Bill of Rights* (New York Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution 1990). As a lead-up to the bicentennial, he edited *The Reluctant Pillar: New York and the Adoption of the Federal Constitution* (Rowman and Littlefield 1985).

In 2018, he revived a training program for New York's State Academy for Public Administration (<https://stateacademy.org/>). To honor Stephen after his death, the academy changed the name of its Essentials of Public Administration Program to the Stephen L. Schechter Essentials of Public Service and Leadership Program. He