

In Honor of Herb Jacob

Elizabeth Mertz

This special issue honors the work of Professor Herbert Jacob, a pioneer in the study of law and society, and a past president of the Law and Society Association. The breadth of subject matter covered by the articles in this issue is a testament to Herb's wide-ranging scholarly agenda and his legendary intellectual curiosity. These aspects of his legacy may help to explain why younger as well as senior generations of law-and-society scholars feel the loss of this member of our community so keenly. I was among the many recipients of Herb's generous and open-minded attention to junior scholars; when I had just arrived at the American Bar Foundation and joined Chicago's vibrant sociolegal studies community, one of the first welcoming phone calls I received was from Herb Jacob. As usual, Herb had more than just idle chitchat on his mind; he had heard that my work drew on anthropological linguistics, and he wanted to know what this field might contribute to political science efforts at analyzing legal and political texts.

At his urging, I embarked on a semester-long series of seminars that introduced the alien world of metapragmatics and prosodic contours to Herb and his political science colleagues. I had much to learn about performing this kind of translating, but Herb's willingness to plow through each week's materials, no matter how arcane—and to show up full of down-to-earth questions and ideas—stand out in my mind as a model. His vibrant and unpretentious interest in new ideas and approaches, as well as his welcoming and nurturing of younger scholars, demonstrated how scholarly communities can create bridges between generations that allow for both continuity and change. Although many of us feel the loss of Herb's ceaseless energy in pursuing sociolegal projects and studies (his frequent calls asking if we couldn't review this or that latest book for *The Law and Politics Book Review*), our field remains much richer because of Herb's enduring legacy.