

# Obituary

## Nicholas Zay (1921–1994)

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Professor Nicolas Zay died on April 24, 1994 at 73 years of age in Quebec City after a long and distinguished career.

Professor Zay received a licenciate in economic and political science and a doctorate of law in his native Hungary. He came to Canada in 1953 and taught in the Schools of Social Work at both Laval University (1966–1988) and the University of Montreal (1953–1966). He was the director of the "Laboratoire de gérontologie sociale" at Laval University from 1973 to 1985.

His training as a jurist, political scientist and social worker naturally led him to emphasize issues that were situated at the crossroads of these fields. His early years were centred on the problems of juvenile delinquency and adult criminality. Gradually his attention was drawn to the development of social policy and legislation in Canada and Quebec from a social security perspective. He was particularly concerned with the tools societies develop to afford protection to individuals who are faced with the risks of illness, work-related accidents, unemployment and old age.

Through his teaching and research activities, Professor Zay led many young students and researchers in Quebec to focus on aging before it became a popular issue in North America. Many who passed through his "laboratoire" were influenced by their contact with him and went on to work in gerontology or related fields, including Verena Bernardin (Haldemann), Marc-André Delisle, Ellen Corin, Lucie Belanger, Suzanne Moffet, Lucie Morin, René Kirouac, and Judith Stryckman.

Professor Zay worked to develop the profession of social worker and the scientific basis of gerontology through a variety of provincial, national and international associations including the Canadian Association on Gerontology, the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the International Association of Schools of Social Work, the Canadian Council of Social Development and the International Council of Social Action.

As the first president of the Quebec Gerontological Association, Professor Zay made sure that organizational support would be available for those working in the field of aging on a provincial basis, particularly in professional careers and in academia. He also made a major contribution to the development of gerontology by publishing the *Dictionnaire-manuel de gérontologie sociale* in 1981. This volume is widely recognized as an essential tool in the field.

Professor Zay was truly a pioneer in gerontology in Quebec and in Canada. He persisted in his efforts to develop the field despite the difficulties he encountered and tirelessly defended his principles and his convictions. He was convinced of the urgent need in our aging societies to use

science and scientific methods to explore and understand the impact of aging and he dedicated his life to that task. We who knew him will always be grateful.

Judith Stryckman