

J. Mark Schuster (1951–2008)

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Mark Schuster, Co-editor of this *Journal* from 1999 to 2007, passed away in Cambridge, Massachusetts on February 25th, 2008. Born in Meriden, Connecticut, he graduated in applied math from Harvard in 1972, after which he moved to MIT to start his Ph.D. in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. He joined the MIT faculty in 1978, becoming an Assistant Professor in 1984 and a Full Professor in 1999. Mark spent 35 years at MIT (with three very fruitful years on leave in Paris, Barcelona, and Chicago), ultimately holding the title of Professor of Urban Cultural Policy. He was not an economist but a very bright analyst of cultural economics and arts funding policies.

In Paris he worked with Augustin Girard, the founder of the mythic Department of Studies and Research at the French Ministry of Culture. During this stay, he began to develop his European connections and his interest in international models of cultural policy and funding. His first book, *Patrons Despite Themselves: Taxpayers and Arts Policy* (1983), with Alan Feld and Michael O'Hare, focused on the US, but *Who's to Pay for the Arts? The International Search for Models of Support* (1989), co-authored with Milton Cummings, faced the difficulties of measuring the costs and benefits of alternative international models, from matching grants and tax breaks to government subsidies and private gifts. His interest in comparative research culminated in 2002 with *Informing Cultural Policy: The Research and Information Infrastructure*, a taxonomy of the different ways to collect, analyze and disseminate data about cultural policy in a large sample of European and North-American cultural agencies. *Preserving the Built Heritage: Tools for Implementation* (1997) with John de Monchaux, and *The Geography of Participation in the Arts* (2000), show two other concerns: the ways to protect and manage efficiently the built heritage, and the limits of cultural democratization policies in relation to new audiences. The latter work, based on a US survey of

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cultural practices by regions, was first developed in the earlier monograph *American Art Museums Audiences* (1991). Finally, *Mapping State Cultural Policy: The State of Washington* (2003) analyzes the impact on cultural dynamics of around 60 different state agencies. This book had a precedent in a working paper of the previous year, “Sub-National Cultural Policy: Where the Action is? Mapping State Cultural Policy in the United States,” and was inspired by the Council of Europe’s exercise in the evaluation of national cultural policies.

Mark Schuster served on the boards of many arts organizations, and served as the Chairman of the *International Alliance of First Night Celebrations*. He was a consultant to a variety of cultural organizations, including the Council of Europe, the UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Arts Council of Great Britain, the Irish Arts Council, the Catalan and the Hungarian Ministries of Culture, the Canada Council, the Northeast Mayors’ Institute on City Design, the London Arts Board and National Public Radio.

I met Mark in 1990 at the 6th International Conference on Cultural Economics in Umeå, Sweden, and I was immediately impressed by his sharp analysis and intellect. I discovered his vast generosity when I first went to visit him in Cambridge, and he gave me one of his two copies of Baumol and Bowen’s famous treatise on *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma* (1966). My stay as a visiting scholar at MIT in 1991 and his sabbatical period in Barcelona the next year strengthened our friendship. I learned how to teach students without imposing my approach, and I still use his very useful model of analysis of governmental intervention.

He was a professor of great kindness and openness. He knew the perfect balance between total preparedness and the willingness to respond to unexpected approaches or opportunities. He was a man of strength and faith in the human being, very enthusiastic and at the same time a rigorous analyst. Even in the middle of an agitated conference dinner he was able while delivering a keynote speech to capture fully the audience.

During these last four and a half years, when he was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma, he never let his illness control his life. He continued to teach and to travel to conferences or with his family whenever he was feeling better. Even 2 days before he died he went out to the (not for profit) theater with his wife, Charlotte. Mark Schuster will be recognized as a renowned scholar on urban cultural policy as well as a key figure in the field of cultural economics.