

In Memoriam



John M. Virgo, Ph.D.
March 11, 1943 - November 29, 2012

Founder and Executive Vice President
International Atlantic Economic Society,
Founder and Managing Editor, *Atlantic Economic Journal*,
Founder and Editor-in-Chief, *International Advances in Economic Research*

John founded the International Atlantic Economic Society in 1973 with the goal of increasing the opportunity for the exchange of new ideas among economists in the Atlantic area. As the organization became more international in scope over the years, his ambition of increasing communication among economists across the Atlantic was realized. He devoted his heart and soul to the organization, serving as president from 1973 to 1976 and as executive vice president from 1976 until his untimely death from brain cancer and bacterial meningitis in 2012.

John was also founder (1973) and managing editor of the *Atlantic Economic Journal* (AEJ) and founder (1995) and editor-in-chief of *International Advances in Economic Research* (IAER). John's purpose in founding the AEJ was to further

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economics on both the theoretical and applied levels, permit new original work to be shared with other economists in the Atlantic area, and complement rather than compete with publications existing at its inception. His intent in founding IAER was to promote global dissemination and communication of scholarly research in all areas of economics and related fields, rather than solely within narrow subspecialty areas, and to promote policy-oriented and empirical research, thereby filling a different niche than the AEJ.

Perhaps less well known to more recent IAES members, John founded a second organization in Paris in 1983 entitled the International Health Economics and Management Institute (IHEMI), serving as chief executive officer until 1987 and on the IAER Board of Directors from 1987 to 1990. The primary goal of the Institute was to improve and expand knowledge in health care economics and management systems. The Institute and its conferences, held in conjunction with the conferences of the International Atlantic Economic Society, brought together hospital administrators, health economists, high level government officials, and business leaders to discuss solutions to the increasing costs of health care and declining government reimbursement.

John was born in Prestbury, Cheshire County, England, and emigrated with his parents, John and Muriel, to the U.S. in 1949. He graduated with a B.A. (1967) and M.A. (1969) in economics from California State University at Fullerton and an M.A. (1971) and Ph.D. (1972) in economics from Claremont Graduate University. He wrote over 50 peer-reviewed articles, four books, and several monographs. He served as a consultant to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; U.S. Department of Labor; the states of California, Virginia, and Illinois; and numerous regional groups. Beginning in 1975, John taught for over 30 years at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (SIUE), having previously taught at Virginia Commonwealth University from 1972 to 1974 as well as numerous universities in California from 1970 to 1972. He was awarded professor emeritus status at SIUE in 2005 and continued teaching for three more years.

On a personal level, John was a gentle and loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and son, a fan of the arts and classical music, and enjoyed long walks in the botanical gardens and on the beach. He and I had the rare luxury of working together, collaborating on manuscripts, and traveling together throughout our 32 married years. I continue his life's work in his honor and per his request.

This IAER special issue in John's memory is the second in a two-part series. The September 2013 issue of the AEJ was also devoted to his memory. The first half of the current IAER special issue is comprised of eight original manuscripts primarily contributed by members of the IAER Board of Editors in areas of particular interest to John: labor and human capital (Dorota Witkowska and Attiat Ott, both former Executive Committee members), monetary issues in the European Union and transition economies (Reinhard Neck, current IAES president, and Antonin Rusek, former Program Committee member); health economics and policy (Nicholas Apergis, former Executive Committee member, and Roger Battistella, former IHEMI Board of Directors member); and trade (Eleanor Doyle, former Program Committee member, and Jannett Highfill, former IAER Board member).

The second half of the current IAER issue contains six reflection pieces highlighting different aspects of each author's interactions with John over time. Attiat Ott, former Executive Committee member, discusses the fractured nature of the field of

economics and the need for global interaction that prompted John to found the Society. Jannett Highfill, former IAER Board member, highlights John's people "connector" skills and provides a sonnet reflecting on conference memories. Reinhard Neck, current president of the Society, reflects on John's and the Society's close ties to Austria, and the friendship they developed over more than 30 years. Eduard Hochreiter, former Executive Committee member, builds on Reinhard's comments regarding collaborations with John to organize conferences in Vienna and reminds us of John's skill at encouraging global interaction. Joseph Daniels, current AEJ Board member and former Executive Committee member, describes the unique circumstances surrounding his collaboration with John while organizing the 2006 Berlin conference and reminds us of the meaning of John's longstanding tradition of awarding plaques. Gerald Lander, former Executive Committee member, tells the story of his long-term collaboration with John to include accounting sessions as an integral part of the Society's conferences and the humorous adventures that often accompanied these endeavors.

I thank the authors who contributed to this issue in John's memory. I know he would have been honored that each was willing to take time from already busy schedules of teaching, research, and service to participate in this effort.

In closing, John had a rare combination of entrepreneurial foresight to be ahead of the curve in his thinking, the courage to act on his beliefs while knowing when to seek the guidance and assistance of others, and the detail-oriented skills necessary to thoughtfully carry out his plans. John's spirit of entrepreneurship, warm smile, and engaging nature will be missed, but his legacy will endure.

Katherine S. Virgo
Executive Vice President
and
Editor-in-Chief