

A Network Pioneer Has Passed Away

We have lost one of the original thinkers in sociology. Steve Berkowitz died in Burlington, Vermont, October 8 2003. The immediate cause of death was a heart attack, while Steve was at a hospital Intensive Care Unit having something attended to. Just before he died, he called his wife Terry to come pick him up because he was feeling better. So, Steve does not appear to have suffered long at the end.

Steve had had heart attacks before, and he had serious diabetes and kidney problems. For those who remember his big booming voice, it was difficult to recognize his phone calls in the past while. He had also lost a great deal of weight.

But that is not the Steve that most of us experienced for many years. The images I have in my mind are of Steve consuming a dozen bagels one breakfast at my house, of copious amounts of Coke downed while we edited (in pre-diabetic days), of Steve propounding some fascinating idea around the lunch table and holding us all enthralled for hours, of many, many phone calls, and of Terry's sculpture of a Buddha-like sitting Steve, entitled, "Minor Living God." My last vision is of Steve arriving at the Sitges Sunbelt in a voortrekker outfit -- floppy hat, khaki vest, shorts and walking stick -- apparently having walked from South Africa where he was a visiting professor.

Steve was a complex guy who never took the easy way. There was always something going on in his life. He was my colleague at the University of Toronto in the late seventies and early eighties when the social network enterprise had much momentum and originality. He was a major supporter when I founded INSNA and this journal, *Connections*, always pushing for original ways of doing things.. He was a brilliant co-editor on our *Social Structures: A Network Approach*. We had great discussions about what the book should look like, and he performed the heroic feat of translating Harrison White into English. Yet, Steve could be maddening. When he was at Vermont and I in Toronto, so many deadlines were missed that I finally called the Burlington postmaster to ask about why they kept losing Steve's mail. (This was in the prehistoric, pre-Fedex, pre-attachment days.)

At the time of his death, Steve was in the early stages of working on a revised edition of *Social Structures* (along with Doug White). I look forward to seeing Cambridge publish it, both for its usefulness and as a testament to Steve.

As important as *Social Structures* has been (if I do say so myself), I believe that Steve's most important work was his *An Introduction to Structural Analysis*, long out of print. It was the first integrated statement of the social network approach. Importantly, it emphasized theory and substance, rather than treating social network analysis as a methodological parlor trick. I still send folks to read it.

Steve left Toronto for Vermont in the mid 1980s. Almost every day since, I have found myself missing his energy and his insights. Everything that Steve did, every call that Steve made was "urgent".

Steve loomed large to all who know him. The world is an emptier place today. I am sure that as long as social networkers sit around campfires, Steve Berkowitz stories will be told. Indeed, editor Bill Richards and I invite readers to contribute their own for publication in the next issue of *Connections*.