

Alfred Joseph Kahn, social policy scholar and educator, who taught at Columbia University for 57 years (1947–2004) and pioneered comparative international research in child and family policy in the industrial world, died on February 13, 2009 in New Jersey. He was 90 years old and—remaining active subsequent to his teaching retirement—held the post-retirement titles Professor Emeritus, Special Research Scholar, and Special Lecturer. In 1952, Columbia awarded Dr. Kahn the first social welfare doctorate in New York State.

Author, consultant, teacher, and advocate, Dr. Kahn made innovative contributions to social planning and social policy theory, social welfare programs, and graduate social work education. He was the author of widely-used and translated texts in these fields. His comparative social policy research with Professor Sheila B. Kamerman of Columbia alerted American policy makers, administrators, researchers, and citizen-advocates to needs and options in child care, maternity and parental leaves, poverty, welfare programs, and child welfare.

He taught doctoral students for over 35 years about the evolution of American social policy as he had experienced it, about policy and planning, and about the history of social work education. An advocate of public responsibility for social security, medical, and social service programs, he emphasized universal social benefits and services, “Good enough for every American...not for the poor alone.”

As consultant to Federal, State, and Local agencies, international organizations, and foreign governments, Dr. Kahn shared his expertise in basic family policy, cash and service programs, local community service planning and coordination, and issues of equality and equity. As author, editor, co-author, and co-editor, he produced over 50 books and 300 articles and chapters that continue to have impact worldwide.

Early in his research career (1947–1966), as consultant to New York’s Citizens Committee For Children (CCC), Dr. Kahn provided leadership to research staff and community lay leaders, and he authored some 15 studies of City and State programs concerned with truancy, youth, police, children’s court, protective services, and child guidance programs for children in trouble. The widely-publicized and discussed results offered blueprints for local reform and national attention. They were also the foundation for a 1963 volume, *Planning Community Services For Children In Trouble*, with a Foreword by Eleanor Roosevelt, CCC board member, who wrote, “Too many communities have been willing to accept the agency and institution as the planning unit. Examination of experience discloses that effective intervention is so complex a process that it is doomed to failure unless all agencies are part of a truly integrated, carefully planned network.”

As officer, board member, and participant in various national professional associations and research centers, Dr. Kahn was able to continuously contribute to current developments and disseminate the results of his research and experience. In the early 1980s, he chaired the influential Committee on Child Development Research and Public Policy of The National Academy of Science.

(Continued)

Dr. Kahn was the recipient of awards and honors from various universities and professional associations, including several honorary degrees, one from the University of York in England, awarded jointly to him and Sheila B. Kamerman, in recognition of their pioneering work in cross-national child and family policy research.

He is survived by: his daughter, Nancy Valerie Kahn, of New York; his brother and sister-in-law, Melvin and Evelyn Kahn, of New Jersey; and his sister, Batya Weissman, of Minnesota. Burial was private. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to "The Alfred J. Kahn Doctoral Fellowship Fund at Columbia University School of Social Work," c/o Development Office, Columbia University School of Social Work, 1255 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027.

Degrees: B.S.S., CCNY, 1939; B. Heb. Lit, Seminary College of Jewish Studies, 1940; M.S. 1946 and D.S.W. 1952, Columbia University.

For further detail, see Marquis' *Who's Who In America* (all editions since 1967), *Who's Who In The World*, "Alfred J. Kahn – Background Summary," and "Alfred J. Kahn – Professional Publications" list (available at Columbia University School of Social Work).