In Memoriam

Robert Chilton Calfee
Distinguished Professor of Education & Dean, Emeritus
UC Riverside
1933-2014

Distinguished Professor and Dean Emeritus of Education Dr. Robert Chilton Calfee passed away on October 25, 2014. Dr. Calfee was an Educational Psychologist and recognized as a mentor to students, shared a passion for education, and known as a leading scholar in the areas of research on the practice of teaching, reading and writing processes, and pedagogy.

Robert Chilton Calfee was born on January 26, 1933, in Lexington, Kentucky, and attended college at University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) where he graduated in 1959 with a Bachelor’s degree. He continued on at UCLA where he also completed an M.A. in 1960 and a Ph.D. in 1963. During his college years, he enlisted in the United States Air Force between 1953-1957. Upon completion of his Ph.D., Dr. Calfee served as a Research Associate in the Department of Psychology at Stanford University from 1963-1964. He then began his academic career at the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he served as an Assistant Professor and later earned tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor. Then, in 1969, Dr. Calfee returned to Stanford and began the position of Associate Professor in the School of Education. For the next 30 years at Stanford, Dr. Calfee directed the Center for Education Research at Stanford (CERAS), directed the Stanford Teacher Education Program, served as Associate Director of the Study of Stanford in the Schools, served as the Associate Dean of Research and Development, and promoted to Professor of Education and Psychology where he served
under that title between 1971 and 1998. After retiring, he came to UC Riverside where he
served for 5 years as a Distinguished Professor of Education and Dean of the UC
Riverside Graduate School of Education. Upon retiring from UC Riverside, he returned
as an Emeritus on Recall at the Stanford University School of Education.

Dr. Calfee’s research career centered on issues of reading and writing, building strong
schools, and shared a deep commitment to making theory and research impact
educational practice. With over 300 publications, Dr. Calfee was known as a scholar
committed to practice and impact. He exuded a deep commitment to underserved
students and his work proved that over his career. Scholars, leaders, and practitioners
alike commented on Dr. Calfee’s commitment to reaching students and teachers in the
classroom. His scholarship was largely centered on the science of reading and he
published volumes of research.

Later in his career, Dr. Calfee became a key figure in the development of LeapFrog
reading technology. Through this effort, he was able to apply his research and
knowledge about reading to a widely used learning tool accessible to school-aged
children.

Dr. Calfee received many accolades, honors, and awards over the course of his career. In
1972 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship, received honors in 1976 and 1986 from the
American Psychological Association, in 1981/1982 named a Fellow for the Center for
Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences, in 1993 named a member of the International
Reading Association Hall of Fame, in 1990 elected as a Fellow of the American
Association for the Advancement of Science, and in 2003 received the Oscar Causey
Award for his Outstanding Contributions to Research by the National Reading
Conference (now the Literacy Research Association).

Between 1985-1990, Dr. Calfee served as the editor of the *Journal of Educational
Psychology* and between 1992-1998 served as the editor of *Educational Assessment*. He
also held various notable positions: He was a Trustee for the Palo Alto Unified School
District between 1984-1987, served on the Board of Directors for the National Society
for the Study of Education between 1995-1998 and served as Chair between 1997-1998,
and served on the advisory boards for numerous journals. He served as a consultant for
various organizations including Chairman of the Educational Advisory board for
LeapFrog, Inc. between 2002-2007, among others.

Dr. Calfee was a member of numerous organizations including the American Association
for the Advancement of Science, the American Education Research Association, the
American Psychological Society, the International Reading Association, the National
Conference of Research in English, and many others.

Previous colleagues, associates, and mentees described Dr. Calfee as a role model,
mentor, and a scholar committed to applied research. His esteemed career not only
impacted the students and scholars with whom he interacted in higher education, but
also students and teachers in our nation’s schools.
Dr. Calfee is survived by his wife, Suzanne Barchers; three children, Adele (Calfee) Woodward, Robert W. Calfee, and Elise Sachs, and four grandchildren. Dr. Calfee also has three surviving sisters, Sara (Calfee) Goodno, Jean (Calfee) Knapp, and Loretta Calfee.

This memorial was completed by faculty of the Graduate School of Education and edited by Darleen DeMason.