

Memorial Minute for Myron (Mickey) Glazer
Written and read by Nancy Whittier at the March 27, 2019 Faculty Meeting

Myron (Mickey) Glazer was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1934, the youngest of several children, and had by his account an idyllic childhood. He graduated in 1952 from City College in New York, with a degree in sociology and history. After earning an M.A. in Sociology from Rutgers, Mickey went on to complete his PhD at Princeton in 1965, after which he took a position in Sociology at Smith, where he remained until retiring in 2006. He was the Barbara Richmond Professor in the Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology, served as Chair of the Department for more than 10 years, and as Co-Director of the Project on Women and Social Change, and the Jewish Studies Program.

Mickey's early research developed from his doctoral dissertation on the political and professional attitudes of university students in Chile. This work yielded three books, published in rapid succession in 1970 and 1972: *Student Politics in Chile*, with Frank Bonilla; *Latin American University Students: A Six-Nation Study*, with Arthur Liebman and Kenneth Walker; and *The Research Adventure: Promises and Problems of Field Work*. In the ensuing years, Mickey's research was dedicated to the challenges faced by those exposing corruption within large organizations and government, in collaboration with the historian Penina Migdal Glazer, Mickey's wife and intellectual partner. Their 1989 book, *The Whistleblowers: Exposing Corruption in Government and Industry*, was a groundbreaking study of the experiences and consequences of whistleblowing. The book was honored by the Government Accountability Project in Wash. DC, which distributed copies of the book to the Governor and all 120 members of the California State Legislature in 1989 on the occasion of the permanent passage of California's Whistleblower Protection Act. The Executive Director of that group wrote that Mickey, "recognized and bestowed honor on whistleblowers at a time when few people had the courage and clarity of conscience to do so." Mickey and Penina continued their research on courageous behavior with a focus on environmental activists, publishing *The Environmental Crusaders: Confronting Disaster and Mobilizing Community* in 1998. With co-authors, they published *Courageous Resistance: The Power of Ordinary People*, in 2007, focusing on a broad range of cases. Mickey also co-authored two sociology textbooks early in his career and in 2004, with Penina, wrote the book *The Jews of Paradise* on the history of the Jewish community in Northampton, as part of a series commemorating Northampton's 350th anniversary.

Mickey's deep and enduring interest in the courage of ordinary people to resist evil even at great risk to themselves guided his teaching as well as his research. He was a dedicated teacher, who

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enthusiastically taught introductory sociology throughout his career, as well as sociology's course on Qualitative Research Methods, where he brought his considerable skills in fieldwork and interviewing to students. Mickey also offered several important courses related to the topic of courageous behavior. His students in these courses found them life-changing, and many years later attributed their own activism and ethical resistance to the lessons they learned in Mickey's classroom.

In addition to sociology, Mickey was part of another important community at Smith, 10 Prospect. In the early 1990s, Mickey's longtime friend and office-mate Howard Nenner recalled, Smith undertook a large-scale renovation of 10 Prospect. Mickey became an unofficial faculty liaison for the project, and when the job was done he moved seamlessly into position as the "Ten Prospect Super." Never mind that he was a senior member of the faculty. No janitorial job was beneath him. He gladly made repeated calls for more toilet paper, oversaw the daily collection of trash and recyclables, and made certain that light bulbs were replaced immediately.

Mickey brought his optimism, interest in everyone's children and families, and wise counsel on research and teaching to all of us in 10 Prospect. It was impossible to enter his office without seeing photos of his beloved grandchildren. Velma Garcia recalled that, "One day I was in a bad mood and as I came down the stairs I saw Mickey smiling and it occurred to me that he was NEVER in a bad mood; he was always positive and happy and telling jokes. So that day I had to ask him about his personality--why was he always so upbeat? He smiled and said "I had several older sisters who helped to raise me. They coddled me and loved me and took care of me." He gave all the credit to his sisters, which is so characteristic of Mickey."

Mickey faced the challenges of Parkinson's disease with his characteristic tenacity and his sociological interest in courageous behavior – in this case, his own. In a memoir about his experience with the disease, he wrote that upon diagnosis he asked himself, "Can I turn from victim into resistance fighter?" Indeed, he continued to travel internationally, spend time with family and friends, and write, throughout the remainder of his life.

In addition to his large extended family, Mickey Glazer is survived by his wife Penina Migdal Glazer, his beloved children Joshua Glazer and Jessica Whately, their spouses, and five grandchildren.