



Doris Mae Bergen

February 11, 1932 - July 5, 2023

Doris Bergen, 91, passed away peacefully on July 5, 2023 after a short illness. A long-time resident of Hamilton, Ohio, she had recently moved to the Knolls of Oxford with her beloved husband of 39 years, Joel Fink. Dr. Bergen was a professor of Educational Psychology at Miami University, and an expert in studying and creating ways to strengthen brain development in young children. Her work led to numerous books and dozens of national honors. An authority on children's play and humor, her research papers are housed in the Archives at the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, NY. In 2019 she was inducted into the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame to honor the impact of her life's work after age 60. Having served as the chair of her department at Miami University for 11 years, Dr. Bergen didn't fully retire until age 85, and at the time of her death was still collaborating on another book. Born in 1932 in St. Louis, Missouri, Dr. Bergen was inspired by her father to trust in her intelligence and ability. She was the first person in her family to attend college. She grew up in Bucyrus, Ohio and attended Heidelberg College and Ohio State University. At age 42, after raising three daughters with her first husband, she earned her PhD in Educational Psychology from Michigan State University. Generous, optimistic, and loving to her family, Dr. Bergen loved discussing ideas, attending the theater, mentoring her students, and presenting research at numerous conferences throughout the country. Through the years she was active with the Hamilton Tree Board and as a member of her church, the Hopedale UU Community. She supported many

charities and organizations that help women and the environment. In addition to her husband, Dr. Bergen is survived by her brother George, her daughters Ellen (Chris), Holly (Ray), and Gail, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Services will be private. In her honor, please consider a donation to the Hamilton (Ohio) Community Foundation N. 3rd St Hamilton, Ohio 45011. Online condolences may be left at www.weigelfuneralhome.com.

Tribute Wall

JC

“ *This amazing lady was my graduate advisor for my Masters program at Miami University. She taught fiercely, with grace and compassion, but also knew when to be brutally honest and taught me so much about tough love, not only for my students, but also for myself. I am saddened to learn of her passing, but I will carry her lessons with me for the entirety of my career.*



Jessy Chase - October 16, 2023 at 09:48 PM

RR

“ *Doris was my professor and mentor when I was a grad student at Oakland U in Michigan in the early 70's. She continued to support and encourage me to step out of my comfort zone throughout my career. We shared much in the 50 plus years I knew her. We were both members of Unitarian Universalist faith communities. We compared our successes and challenges in our involvement in those communities. I continued to ask her advice on so many issues!*

I have never known someone as giving and supportive of others as Doris was. She has left a wonderful legacy as a researcher, writer as well as mentor, teacher and friend. I was able to communicate with her just weeks before her death. She faced it with her usual grace and acceptance, stating that she had led a fulfilling life and was satisfied with all that she had accomplished. I miss her deeply.

Becky Reid

Rebecca Reid - September 21, 2023 at 06:17 PM

GB

Hi Becky: Thanks for the beautiful comments about my Mom. Wishing you well. Gail

Gail Burnett - March 27, 2024 at 08:13 PM

PF

“*I'm truly heartbroken to hear of the passing of Dr. Bergen. While I was a graduate student at Miami, she was my professor, thesis advisor, mentor, and friend. Dr. Bergen was exceptionally generous with her time; she was a fantastic listener and confidante. She and her husband frequently invited me to dinner at their house and special events around the region. They were sources of stability, comfort, and guidance during a time in which I lived relatively far from my family. As an academic mentor, Dr. Bergen modeled an impressive work ethic. She was truly indefatigable. I don't think anyone in the department could outwork or outproduce her. She moved, thought, spoke, wrote, and worked quickly, precisely, and relentlessly. Her research prowess was highly respected in and outside the department and everyone wanted to work with her because it was understood that something would come of it if they did. Dr. Bergen had high expectations of those around her. She spent countless hours helping improve my work and writing, pushing me to realize my potential. I was extremely lucky to have had a chance to work with and learn from her... We talked a few times in the weeks before she passed. I'll never forget the wisdom she imparted in those moments, how positive she remained, her grateful attitude up until the end. During those conversations, she was ever my professor and mentor, as lucid and brilliant as the first day I met her. I will miss her dearly.*”

Patrick Frato - September 01, 2023 at 09:48 PM

YH

“ I am saddened to hear of the passing of Doris. Such a warm and wonderful being, who gave of her time without question and so freely. Sending my prayers to her family.
Yvette R. Harris



Yvette R Harris - August 17, 2023 at 12:35 PM

CS

“ I was Doris' colleague at Miami. I'm grateful for the time we had together. Her incisive intellect, together with her practical and collaborative spirit and her sense of humor, were inspiring. Her professional work and impact embodied the developmental process of how we learn through the interaction among ideas, outcomes in the world and social interactions. Her family will be in my thoughts.

Cecilia Shore - July 23, 2023 at 07:01 AM

SI

“ A graduate course, *Theories of Human Learning*, I took, was one of the most memorable courses I completed at Miami. Dr. Bergen was the professor and also the author of one of the texts we used. Shortly before the midterm, I reinjured my back. Dr. Bergen helped to arrange the make-up exam in one of the offices. I had to bring a walker in and hold onto a cabinet, while standing, for the exam. However, I earned an A+ in the course. One of the group activities was very challenging and it was fun that my group found the answer first. It forced us to be collaborative. Without that collaboration, I doubt any of us would have been able to solve it as quickly. I suggested creating a matrix (an idea adopted by the other groups after I suggested it) and another student was instrumental in working out the details. The quizzes certainly rewarded regular careful study of the assigned material. Her approach to the class was no-nonsense and yet she always maintained an atmosphere of cordial positivity. Questions were always met with genuine interest, although her clear and thorough presentation reduced the need for asking them, typically.

Stephen R. Sauer II - July 14, 2023 at 11:39 AM

PM

“ We are deeply saddened to hear this news. It was a pleasure to get to know her and the entire family. Sending love and condolences to all.

Pete and Connie McCarthy

Pete McCarthy - July 14, 2023 at 09:57 AM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Doris Mae Bergen.



July 12, 2023 at 03:12 PM



“ Doris was among the first people I met at Miami University when I interviewed with her in 2012. I will always be a big fan. In my first year, Doris took me out to a special lunch. She mentored me and wanted to ensure my success in teaching one of her theories courses upon retirement; she joined that particular class for an exceptional guest lecture one evening. Doris was also quick to email with support - always proactive, gracious, and helpful. She interviewed me for one of her books projects (play examples of my own children) and I loved reading her final product. Doris was exceptional in every way and I miss her dearly. With love, Katy Mezher



Katy Mezher - July 11, 2023 at 05:28 PM

DS

“ Dear Family,
Doris was a dear friend, respected colleague, and dedicated writing partner. We had just finished an article that was recently published and were in the process of working on a book on creativity, one of her many areas of expertise. We frequently attended the same conferences and found our interests intersected at play and creativity. We enjoyed working together and her clear logic, good humor, quick wit and magic pen made it a truly pleasurable experience, one that I will miss.
May you find peace in knowing the extent of the impact that Doris Bergen has had on the world.
Dorothy Sluss

Dorothy Sluss - July 10, 2023 at 02:17 AM

SB

“ Sincerely, Mark Brown purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Doris Mae Bergen.



Sincerely, Mark Brown - July 06, 2023 at 06:44 PM

DF

“ Dear Family,
Doris was my trusted and loved friend, a professor's professor, a generous colleague, and a model of humanity. She loved her daughters and grandchildren, and was a model of unconditional love.
In my own life, I have found some comfort by imagining that we live in each other's imaginations, even when we are in the next room.
My heart is with you.
Hugs, Doris Fromberg

Doris Fromberg - July 06, 2023 at 06:37 PM

YG

“ Ying G. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Doris Mae Bergen.

Ying G. - July 06, 2023 at 11:41 AM

LC

“ Doris served as my mentor for numerous research projects. She will be missed by the play community.

Lynn Cohen, Ph.D. Long Island University



Lynn Cohen - July 06, 2023 at 10:04 AM

AM

“ Doris was an exceptional teacher, mentor, friend, role model, and person. I am so grateful for the time and conversations we had together over the years, and I will miss her deeply. Her legacy will live on in many ways, including the lasting impact she had on so many of us. ❤️

Amity - July 06, 2023 at 04:45 AM

RC

“ God wants us to serve Him first, but a truly full and productive life is also measured by how we serve the people we love and what we give back to society.

Doris was generous with her love to her three beautiful daughters, who have passed along this same kind of love to their own kids. She was a devoted wife throughout her life.

What she contributed in the academic arena over a span of seven decades is of profound importance and impact, arguably to a historic degree.

Her countless accomplishments wrote a life story that is to be celebrated by all those touched by it. May we all honor her legacy of personal and professional success. -- Reid Creager

Reid Creager - July 06, 2023 at 12:53 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Doris Mae Bergen.



July 05, 2023 at 04:00 PM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Doris Mae Bergen.



July 05, 2023 at 12:09 PM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Doris Mae Bergen.*



July 05, 2023 at 12:09 PM



“ *My husband Ed and I had many, many dinners with Doris and Joel over the years. Doris said that it seemed people liked to talk about things, people, or ideas—and she and Joel loved to talk about ideas. In these last few weeks of her life she and I talked several times about how this dying stage was just another stage of development, albeit, the last one. I shall sorely miss the talks she and I had.*

Jan Teets - July 05, 2023 at 11:42 AM