

At a Meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences on May 15, 2007, the following Minute was placed upon the records.

ARTHUR MAASS

Born: July 24, 1917

Died: March 26, 2004

Arthur Maass, the Frank G. Thomson Professor of Government, *Emeritus*, was a political scientist in the grand tradition, a scholar who wanted not only to find out how the institutions of government actually work, but also what could be done to make them better serve the common good. This passion both to analyze and to reform, this two-fold institutional and normative approach, inspired the work in each of his main fields, public administration and the legislative process. His early research on the Army Corps of Engineers in time made him one of the twentieth century's most influential authorities on the planning and development of the nation's water resources. Later on, his pioneering study of the Congress as an organ of government by discussion again displayed an institutional and normative approach, anticipating by years the concern with "deliberative democracy" among political scientists. This fearless and penetrating mind grasped the weaknesses of our pluralistic democracy and its abundant promise of national achievement.

Arthur Maass launched his professional career with a fierce attack that ultimately led to fundamental reforms. He had been well prepared for this venture. After taking his A.B. at Johns Hopkins in 1939 and an M.P.A. at Harvard in 1941, he spent the war years and immediately thereafter serving on such agencies as the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, the Natural Resources Planning Board, the Bureau of the Budget and the water resources staff of the Natural Resources Task Force of the first Hoover Commission. Returning to Harvard he won his Ph.D. in 1949. His dissertation, which examined the development of the water resources of the United States, led to his first book, *Muddy Waters: The Army Engineers and the Nation's Rivers*. Published in 1951 with an explosive introduction by FDR's feisty Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, it became a classic of political science. It was notable not only as an exposé of cozy relationships between the private and public sectors, but also and above all as an analysis of an "iron triangle," its dysfunctional consequences and a scheme of reform. He did not use that term, but his example served as the model for a host of succeeding studies, so named. Like *Muddy Waters*, breaking from the conventional focus on pressure groups simply as agents of private interests, they revealed complex networks of influence among interest groups, congressional committees and bureaucratic agencies.

Although a severe critic of the iron triangle, Arthur Maass was no enemy of the bureaucratic expert. On the contrary, he brought to the study of public administration the high regard for both natural and social science common in those days of the atom bomb and Keynesian economics. He had great faith that this approach could be used to remedy the self-defeating pluralism of the iron triangles by means of a comprehensive process of planning. A framed sign in his room read, "Make no little plans; they have not the power to move men's souls." While Director of the Harvard Water Program in 1955 to 1965, he led and edited a massive multidisciplinary effort entitled *Design of Water Resource Systems: New Techniques for Relating Economic Objectives, Engineering Analysis, and Government Planning*. Published in 1962, this work pioneered the use of computers to construct complex mathematical models of river systems in order to better coordinate demands for hydroelectric power, flood control, irrigation,

industrial and city water supply, navigation and recreation. Many of its ideas were later incorporated in, *Principles and Guidelines*, the Corps' manual of water resources management.

While American problems were Arthur Maass's main concern, he also studied similar questions in other countries. His attention being attracted by irrigation, he traveled widely in and wrote about arid regions not only in the American West, but also in Spain, Morocco and most surprisingly China at a time when the Chinese were severely restricting contacts with foreigners. He devised an elegant methodology for characterizing and comparing irrigation systems, in 1978 publishing with R. L. Anderson, comparative study, *And the Deserts Shall Rejoice: Conflict Growth and Justice in Arid Environments*. Interspersed with his books he also published a number of substantial articles and monographs on this and other relevant topics.

The culminating recognition of Arthur's mastery of water resources management came on April 6, 2001. That day half a century after the publication of *Muddy Waters* the Army Corps of Engineers honored him for his severe, but instructive critique over the years. At a ceremony in its research headquarters, the Corps with a great array of brass on hand accepted the personal libraries of research materials donated by Dr. Arthur Maass and Dr. Gilbert White, another pioneer in the field, as a reference room named after the two scholars.

In his last major work, *Congress and the Common Good* (1983), Arthur shifted his focus from the executive to the legislative branch, although, philosophically speaking, as in his earlier work the underlying problem was still how to make the Many into One. Rejecting the widely held view that the democratic process, electoral, legislative and executive, reaches decisions by bargaining and log-rolling among fixed interests, he argued that discussion on the basis of shared values makes a further and decisive contribution by transforming such preferences. In this deliberative model, the achievement is not merely to reflect what is brought to the process, but rather to discover something by means of the process. In exact, detailed analysis of the relation of Congress as a whole to its committees and to the Presidency, he showed how this function was performed. His leadership in this field did a great deal to offset the influence of positivist and behavioral viewpoints. Moreover, his unparalleled knowledge was recognized not only by colleagues, but also by the Congress itself. He was asked to testify on even such intimate matters as reform of the rules.

Throughout his career Arthur's merits and achievements were abundantly recognized. Joining the Department of Government in 1948, he was made an assistant professor in 1949, received tenure in 1954, became a full professor in 1959, chaired the department from 1963 to 1967, in which year he was appointed to the Thomson professorship, and retired to emeritus status in 1984. He enjoyed other governmental and academic appointments in addition to those mentioned above in the United States, China, Spain, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Arthur Maass was not only an eminent scholar, but also a devoted, effective and popular teacher. He offered his specialized lecture courses and seminars and also the big undergraduate course on American Government, a "must" for concentrators. A tutor in Dunster House, he had a close relationship with its undergraduates, a warm friend but also a stern task master, enforcing the wearing of coats and ties and other antique customs then practiced in Cambridge. His care and affection were illustrated by his bequest of a substantial sum to finance free Boston Symphony tickets for Harvard undergraduates.

On retirement he moved from Dunster House to a penthouse high above Boston Harbor where he became well known as “il professore” in the Italo-American community. There he died of kidney failure on March 26, 2004. To the last, however, he kept his office at Littauer, maintaining a lively contact with the governmental world. His affection for the undergraduates did not diminish, but during the disorders brought on by the Vietnam War, he took a strong line against the radicals and their faculty allies, displaying rare talents as a political manager. In these years his political opinions having swung unmistakably from liberal to conservative, the sign advising “no little plans” was missing. Still he retained on his office wall from his New Deal days a framed front page of the *Chicago Tribune* for November 3, 1948, declaring, “DEWEY BEATS TRUMAN.”

Respectfully submitted,

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Joseph Cooper (Johns Hopkins University)
Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (University of Chicago)
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