

<http://www.asanet.org/footnotes/mar04/departments.html>

**Obituary in Footnotes- Newsletter of the American Sociological Association –
Vol 32 – Number 3 - 2004**

**Margaret Stacey
(1922-2004)**

Margaret (Meg) Stacey, Professor Emerita of Sociology, University of Warwick, influential medical sociologist, unceasing advocate for the rights of women and the welfare of children, and lifelong champion of human rights and peace died Tuesday, February 10, after a struggle with congestive heart failure. She was 81.

Her long and distinguished career included faculty positions at University College, Swansea (now called University of Wales), and the University of Warwick, where she chaired the Sociology Department (1974-1979), the Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Studies (1985-1989), and the Management Committee of the Nursing Policy Studies Centre (1985-1989), which she had established. She held numerous visiting professorships and lectureships in California, Ohio, South Africa, Iceland, Central America, Finland, Canada, and Australia.

Other honors came her way: She was elected president of the British Sociological Association in 1981. In 1987 she was made an Honorary Fellow of the University of Wales, Swansea. Keele University gave her the honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1989. The University of Warwick opened its Center for Health and Society in 1999 with an international conference honoring her and her work. On that occasion she noted the theme of her life's work: "The question of suffering has underpinned much of the work I tried to do over the years, particularly the suffering which we human beings inflict on one another, individually or collectively."

Although she had done early work on community studies with a classic study of Banbury and a later follow-up, her most notable achievements were in the sociology of health and illness/medical sociology, a field that she helped pioneer and shape. She was a key figure in the establishment of the British Sociological Association's Medical Sociology Group. Her empirical work on children in hospitals, the division of labor in health care, regulating British medicine, her conceptual writing on constructions of health and illness, medical accountability and ethics, and recent writing on genetics and assisted reproduction generated significant works that other non-medical sociologists and policymakers read. Talented students, attracted by these writings and her substantial reputation as a generous mentor and teacher, flocked to take degrees with her and go on to their own productive careers.

However, Meg Stacey was no "arm chair sociologist." Passionately devoted to enhancing public good, she was an indefatigable participant on innumerable regional and local boards of organizations concerned with women's and children's well being and at the national level served eight years (1976-1984) on the General Medical Council, which regulates British medicine. A vigorous feminist she was at the forefront of numerous struggles around women's issues. Her feminism also suffused her writing. Her 1981 book, *Women, Power and Politics* (co-authored with Marion Price and published by Tavistock), won the Fawcett Prize. Her challenge to accepted conceptualizations of the public/private divide and the division of labor took feminist thinking in new directions. In 1999 she went to Montenegro, Republic of Yugoslavia, to confer and work for peace with Women in Black.

Meg Stacey was born March 27, 1922, in London, where she was educated at the City of London School for Girls. In 1943 she took the B.Sc. (Economics) with First Class Honors at the London School of Economics. In 1944 she served as Labour Officer in the Royal Ordnance Factory. After marrying Frank Stacey, a political scientist, in 1945 while he was on leave from military service in Germany, she was a tutor at Oxford until 1951. In 1951 she followed Frank to Swansea, where Frank had a post in the Politics Department of University College, Swansea. She was "unwaged, but not unemployed, being busy rearing children and writing *Tradition and Change*," as two interviewers described it later. She got a job in 1961 in the Swansea Sociology Department, where she advanced to Senior Lecturer in 1970 and was seconded in 1972 as Director of the Medical Sociology Research Center.

In 1974 they moved to the Midlands where she joined the University of Warwick faculty and Frank joined the University of Nottingham faculty. (Frank Stacey died in 1977, leaving an important book on ombudsmen, which Meg completed.) Meg retired from the University of Warwick in 1989.

Her companion, Jennifer Lorch of Leamington Spa; her sister, Elizabeth Sells of Bath; five children, Patricia Baldwin, Richard Stacey, Kate Sarson, Peter Stacey, Michael Stacey, 16 grandchildren, and one great grandchild survive her.

Although she took pleasure in her professional accomplishments, Meg also thoroughly enjoyed her large family and circle of colleagues and students; many became her close friends. Witty and fun loving, she set many a gracious dinner table for family and friends. Among other memorable recollections were conferences where music for dancing would bring Meg and her friends to the floor, joyfully enlivening the occasion.

Services were held February 19 at Catthorpe Manor in Leicestershire and burial was at Greenhaven Woodland Burial Ground, New Clark's Farm, Warwickshire.

Virginia Olesen, University of California-San Francisco