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IN MEMORIAM

William Zimmerman IV

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William Zimmerman IV, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at The University of Michigan, passed away on April 28, 2025 at the age of 88. "Bill" joined the faculty of The University of Michigan in 1963, formally retiring in 2007, but continuing his academic production, and service to the University, for years thereafter, until age and infirmity forced him to truly and fully "retire."

Bill supervised my doctoral dissertation, completed in 1973, but I had already come to know him during my undergraduate years at UM, when I took his lecture course on Soviet foreign policy and his graduate seminar on Soviet politics. I stayed at UM for graduate work, largely because of Bill.

The practitioner and theorist of higher education, Clark Kerr, once wrote that a "great" university requires a "great" faculty. Bill Zimmerman was an exemplar of such. He was a prolific scholar: four single-authored books; six co-authored or edited volumes, along with some sixty articles and book chapters. He was also highly influential: at least three of his books can be called "seminal": *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations, 1956–1967; Open Borders: Nonalignment and the Political Evolution of Yugoslavia*; and *The Russian People and Foreign Policy: Russian Elite and Mass Perspectives*. All of his other books were important. His works ranged across both Russian and east European foci, across both international relations theory and comparative politics, and across both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

But the greatness that Kerr referenced can be viewed more broadly, to encompass teaching and service as well. Bill was a dedicated mentor to some forty-one doctoral students. He coached us, befriended us, never demanded deference, much less emulation of his theoretical frameworks or methodologies. He helped us to find our own preferred voices. And he obviously enjoyed his relationships with his graduate students and touted them throughout their careers. They reciprocated his friendship, devotion, and admiration. Indeed, many of his former students augmented the Junior Faculty Fund that Bill had created (and heavily funded) at the University in the 2010s. It was a mark of Bill's ethical compass that he never wanted to know who had contributed, much less how much.

Bill also provided critical, selfless service to the University of Michigan as long-serving director of the Center for Russian and East European Studies and of the Center for Political Studies, in addition to many other academic-administrative leadership positions. Unsurprisingly, Bill's impact on the field was acknowledged and celebrated by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, which, in 2004, granted him its "Distinguished Contributions" award, the equivalent of a lifetime achievement award.

Some faculty members at great universities are nomads, always looking for greener pastures elsewhere. Others are nesters, appreciative of where they are and spending most,

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or all, of their careers at that institution. Some faculty are takers, looking out largely or solely for their self-interest; others are givers, gaining satisfaction from contributing in many ways to enhancing their university's greatness. To become or remain great, universities require a critical mass of faculty who are both nesters and givers. Bill Zimmerman was a nester and a giver. Both the University of Michigan and the Slavic-area profession were the better for that.

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