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University community mourns Political Science Professor Emeritus Richard Bald

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Dr. Richard Bald

[From Ohio University News](#)

The Ohio University community mourns Political Science Professor Emeritus Richard Bald, who passed away July 7 at the age of 90.

Bald was a beloved professor of Political Science at OHIO for 35 years. He received numerous awards and commendations for his devotion to his students, department, and university, and he served in many leadership roles. “He was not afraid to speak his convictions and helped to enact change,” according to [his obituary](#).

A Respected Colleague

“No one has had more influence upon me during my tenure at Ohio University than Richard Bald. I respected him enormously and deeply cherished his friendship,” said Felix Gagliano, Emeritus Professor of Political Science and Former Vice Provost for International Affairs.

“Richard was an outstanding leader, not only in the Political Science Department and College of Arts & Sciences, but in Ohio University at large. As chair of the Faculty Senate, he effectively championed and advanced the role of faculty in university governance. As chair of the Political Science Department, he worked collegially but forcefully during a period of extraordinary faculty growth,” Gagliano continued.

Gagliano summed up the feelings of many alumni and colleagues. “Richard was a challenging, yet always very popular teacher, and his classes were always in high demand. His cosmopolitan perspective, incisive intellect and infectious sense

of humor made him a beloved colleague, mentor and friend. I will miss him greatly. In our leisure time, to my chagrin, I discovered him to be a much better chess player than I would ever be! RIP, dear friend and colleague.”

“I don’t think I can acknowledge Dick Bald’s contributions and friendship any better than Felix Gagliano’s eloquent statement,” said Professor Emeritus of Political Science Joseph Tucker. “I would only add two points. Dick did not suffer fools gladly, especially when the perceived fool was a colleague. Second, he was my friend for over six decades, and I will miss him greatly. ”

“I think Felix expressed well the views of Richard’s colleagues. A great intellect without being condescending. A great administrator who treated everyone fairly and with respect. A challenging teacher in the classroom, yet often had to close out students in his classes,” said David Dabelko, Professor Emeritus of Political Science.

“He was very helpful to me in the beginning my career at Ohio University. He made suggestions for interesting topics. He explained what to expect from students, especially in large classes. Richard also facilitated my scholarly research by critiquing my works, encouraging participation in professional associations and giving me some time for research. Although, he was far from a quantitative analysis person, he respected good research in this area (my domain). In fact he was at the forefront of having micro computers in the department in the early 1980s,” Dabelko added. “He was, indeed, a good friend socially. One could not ask for a better colleague.”

Among his accomplishments at OHIO, Bald was instrumental in getting the General Studies program off the ground, and his leadership impact was felt across the campus.

Political Science Professor DeLysa Burnier noted, “Dick was erudite and formidably intelligent, and he challenged students to think deeply about international relations and global politics. He was a valued colleague for me and multiple generations of political science faculty.”

“Dick Bald was my mentor on the Faculty Senate,” said Samuel Crowl, Trustee Professor of English Emeritus. “He was politically savvy, patient, and preferred working behind the scenes to resolve conflicts with the administration. I was proud to succeed him as Senate Chair. He also developed, with John Gaddis (history) and Roger Finlay (Physics) a terrific Tier III course on ‘The Nuclear Age.’”

Harold Molineu, Professor Emeritus of Political Sciences, said, “We both taught in the field of International Politics, but I soon discovered that Dick had a more comprehensive understanding of what was going on in the world and could help me make sense of seemingly disconnected events in ways that would be effective in the classroom.

“In addition, when I became Department Chair, Dick became my confidential adviser on managing the various dimensions of faculty relationships and budgets. He also had a grasp on College politics which enabled the Political Science Department to enhance its status. The University and its faculty, as well as his colleagues and friends will miss him,” added Molineu.

A Beloved Professor

Bald arrived in the United States on a one-year scholarship in 1951, returned to Germany for a year while waiting for his quota number, then entered the country at Ellis Island in 1953 and finished his education. He met and fell in love with a fellow German student at Albion College. He and Wally were married in 1955. He earned a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan and arrived in Athens in 1959. “It was not unusual to find every newspaper, magazine, and publication in the house (and there were many) underlined with a red pencil, complete with notations, until just before his death. Richard wanted to be known as a ‘realist’ and stayed immersed in current events, literature, classical music, travel, and just about any other topic that crossed his path. He enjoyed a good discussion with anyone he met. Many years were spent taming nature on the Bald ‘estate,’ not without incident,” says his obituary.

OHIO alumnus William Saviers ’68 met Professor Bald when he arrived at Ohio University in 1964. Bald became his advisor in the Honors Program, and the two shared an interest in Germany.

“Both my love for German organs and music and his encouragement to study abroad with the cooperation of the Honors College made a dream come true for me, resulting in a year studying in West Berlin that broadened and strengthened me in my studies and personal life. I also became a part of the Ohio Fellows Program started by President Vernon Alden and discovered around 2010 that Dr. Bald was a member of the board overseeing the program,” Saviers said. “Studying German and pipe organ and participating in the Ohio Fellows Program were incredible in the development of my perception of life and the world.”

Saviers added that Bald provided both academic and career support.

"I still chuckle remembering his comment to me after the first semester when I was mortified by almost flunking English 3 with a D, because I couldn't spell when I hand wrote the essays. He just laughed and said the other five A's were just fine. And after graduation when I had to withdraw from entering the University of Virginia Law School to wait on the draft outcome, he graciously had me employed as a graduate assistant when he found out that I was working at a Burger Boy in Belpre, Ohio, grinding hamburgers."

Several Political Science [alumni who visited campus in 2018 for a career panel](#) named Bald as a top OHIO memory.

Tom Grega '95 described Bald as "one of the most merciless graders and professors I've ever worked with. However I loved him, and he helped refine my writing and arguments to at least prepare me initially professionally and further academic work."

William Wyss '84M recalled, "I took Dr. Richard Bald's Government & Politics of West Germany and began a lifelong relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany. Through my knowledge of German politics, I was selected for a museum professional exchange, served on a Rotary International Group Study Exchange, and was appointed a Transatlantic Outreach Fellow. Over my career, I have visited Germany five times as part of professional programming and also have hosted multiple German visitors to the United States."

A celebration of Bald's life is being planned for the fall.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the [Richard Bald Scholarship fund](#) can do so on the OHIO giving site.