

Leonard Rico, Management

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Leonard Rico, an emeritus associate professor of management and industrial relations in the Wharton School and an eminent scholar of labor relations, passed away on June 30. He was 92.

Dr. Rico earned a BS in 1952 from Rutgers University in social studies, English, and education. He then attended the University of Illinois, where he graduated three years later with a MA in labor and industrial relations, writing his thesis about the policies of the United Automobile Workers toward technological change. In 1961, he received a PhD in labor relations from MIT, where he wrote a dissertation looking at the important changes that companies were forced to make in the ways they handle information processing, inter-personal relationships, and manpower planning and forecasting. His thesis later became the basis for his book, *The Advance Against Paperwork: Computers, Systems, and Personnel*, published in 1967. At MIT, Dr. Rico was awarded a Sloan teaching fellowship.

After graduating from MIT, Dr. Rico came to the Wharton School in 1961 as an assistant professor of industry. Four years later, he was promoted to associate professor of management and labor relations. He taught at the Wharton School for most of his career, except for leaves of absence to teach at the University of Pittsburgh (1968-1969), to conduct research at MIT on the functionality of urban and marginal labor markets (1978), and to serve as an academic visitor at the London School of Economics (1985). While at Wharton, Dr. Rico was a long-time teacher of human resources, labor, and industrial relations courses to graduate, undergraduate, and evening school program students.

Dr. Rico worked to align the University of Pennsylvania with affirmative action standards in the 1970s, serving on Penn's Council of Equal Opportunity. In addition, he served on several other University Council committees, such as Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics and Minority Faculty Recruitment, as well as several committees in the Wharton School. In 1987, he served as vice president of the University of Pennsylvania's Faculty Club. In 1993, he won the Sigma Kappa Phi Honor Fraternity Outstanding Professor Award, given for outstanding undergraduate teaching in the Wharton School, and he was also voted the outstanding professor in the Wharton Evening School program for 1987-1988. When he retired from the Wharton School, he was awarded emeritus status.

Dr. Rico published research on a wide range of topics, such as the automation of work, employment discrimination, the personnel function in the firm, and the evolution of trade unions. He published peer-reviewed articles including "Finding Jobs for the Jobless," "The New Industrial Relations: British Electricians' New-Style Agreements," "Legislating Against Unfair Dismissals," "Organizational Conflict," "The Dynamics of Industrial Innovation," "British Trade Unions in Transition: Resurgence of the Friendly Society," and "Automation and Manufacturing Employment: A Reappraisal." His research was funded by grants from the Wharton School Labor Relations Council, the Ford Foundation, and the General Electric Foundation.

In addition to his teaching and research, Dr. Rico consulted for the United States Civil Service Commission, presided over several field-wide conferences, and testified in trials relating to city-level and federal-level employment discrimination. For many years, he served as an arbitrator for the U.S. Postal Service. Dr. Rico was a member of several learned societies, including the American Arbitration Association, the American Association of University Professors, and the Industrial Relations Research Association.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn McLaughlin; his daughter, Susan Rico Connolly (Kevin); his son, Robert Rico; and his grandson, William Leo Rico Connolly. Dr. Rico's memorial service is planned for October 8 at 2 p.m. at the Kendal at Longwood retirement community.