

ERNEST L. BOYER

A LEADER OF EDUCATORS, AN EDUCATOR OF LEADERS

1928 - 1995

Re-printed from the *Ninety-First Annual Report of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*, June 30, 1996, with permission of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 5 Ivy Lane, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

IN EVERY GENERATION there are those whose lives open paths in new directions, transform the landscape, and extend our vision. Ernest L. Boyer, the seventh president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, was such a person. He was a leader of educators and an educator of leaders.

This is the last annual report covering the Boyer era of the Foundation, and we want to take this opportunity to remember both the man and his message. His life left an indelible mark on all of us who worked with him, and in passing from us last winter, he left an extraordinary legacy for the Foundation and for all who are concerned about education—the children and teachers, students and faculty, college administrators and staff, those engaged in public policy and the public engaged in educating their children, in this country and around the world.

Over a remarkable career that spanned four decades, Ernest L. Boyer proved himself to be one of the most articulate and well-reasoned voices in the history of American education. When he died at age sixty-seven, the loss was felt in the White House and the halls of Congress, in state houses and the most remote of school houses. President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton described Ernest Boyer as "one of the finest people we've known, not to mention one of our nation's most dedicated and influential education reformers." Former U.S. Senator Paul Simon called him "a man of backbone, vision, and an understanding of humanity that combined to make him superbly effective.... He enriched our nation in ways that cannot be counted.... He was a gentleman, a scholar, a dreamer and a doer." Senator Mark O. Hatfield said, "His leadership and vision helped to shape education in this country today and for future generations to come." And Alicia Thomas, a principal in San Antonio, Texas, said, "His life was very rich. He gave of himself, and in doing so earned the respect and love of all—family, friends, colleagues, and most especially teachers."

ERNEST LEROY BOYER WAS BORN in Dayton, Ohio, in 1928, the second of three sons, the grandson of a minister, the son of a Dayton businessman. As a child, he possessed what his younger brother described as "a boundless enthusiasm for life." Paul S. Boyer said that he witnessed Ernie's good humor, his ability to resolve conflict and tensions with a joke, and "to invest any occasion with a little edge of excitement." Ernie made all feel at home, said Paul, now a historian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with his "infectious smile... his genuine warmth, his capacity for friendship, the strength of his love for family."

Ernest Boyer himself often described his childhood as stimulating, with friends and softball and creative play. He spent his early years in the public schools of Dayton, where he learned a love of language, including what he always liked to call the languages of music and the arts. He then traveled to Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, to begin a life of study and service.

At the small but spirited college, Boyer continued to develop the intellectual enthusiasm and moral grounding that would later inspire his campaigns on behalf of education and school reform. He solidified his commitment to good works and helping others, and believed such a commitment was a crucial ingredient of education at every level. At Messiah, he also met his future wife and the mother of his four children, Kathryn Garis Tyson. And in subsequent years, he would return to Messiah to serve as chairman and as a member of its board of trustees.

After two years at Messiah, Boyer earned a bachelor of arts degree at Greenville College in Illinois. It was there, as a star of the college debating team, that he honed his verbal skills. He learned to create clear, concise language with clever juxtaposition of phrases, a skill which later became his trademark.

In 1950, he began graduate studies at Ohio State University, then moved west to the University of Southern California, where he earned the master of arts and doctor of philosophy degrees in 1956. Boyer served a post-doctoral fellowship in medical audiology at the University of Iowa Hospital, and later continued his formal studies as a Distinguished Fulbright Scholar in India and Chile and as a Visiting Fellow at Cambridge University.

ERNEST BOYER BEGAN HIS TEACHING and administrative career at Loyola University in Los Angeles and then at Upland College, where he became a professor of speech pathology and audiology, and academic dean. At

Upland, he demonstrated what would become the hallmark of his work in education—a way of thinking that was at once bold and practical, innovative and sensible. He introduced, for example, a January term for an in-depth, all-college study of a single theme. The goal was to integrate all the disciplines and create community. The program became a model for other colleges during the next decade.

In 1960, wanting to make a broader impact on education, Boyer became director of the Western College Association's Commission to Improve the Education of Teachers. Two years later, his work led to his appointment at the University of California at Santa Barbara, as director of the Center for Coordinated Education. Both positions involved finding creative solutions to educational problems. It was this problem-solving gift that would distinguish Carnegie Foundation policy reports more than twenty years later.

By 1965, Boyer was known as a gifted speaker and an exuberant education leader, and he joined the mammoth State University of New York System, based in Albany, as its first executive dean. Three years later he was named vice president. He became known for managing large staff meetings and summarizing complex discussions. His work was so impressive that two years later, at the age of only 42, he was appointed chancellor of the SUNY system with its 64 institutions, 350,000 students, and 15,000 faculty members.

It was as SUNY chancellor that Boyer went about the arduous task of expanding and developing a complex state network of colleges and universities during exciting and trying times for higher education.

Chancellor Boyer launched the innovative and influential Empire State College in Saratoga Springs, an experimental and highly successful prototype for adult education that was imitated across the nation in the years that followed, as millions of adults returned to college for retraining and lifelong learning in a new economic age. In 1996, as Empire State College celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, it boasted 28,000 graduates.

Chancellor Boyer called for higher academic standards throughout the SUNY system and established an intensive, three-year bachelor of arts program to challenge the brightest students in the system and allow them to advance more quickly into graduate study.

To signal the importance of teaching as the critical art of higher education, even in a giant research institution, Boyer initiated a new rank of "Distinguished Teaching Professor." The post celebrated the achievements of great instruction and a commitment to student learning. He also started the nation's first undergraduate student exchange program with the Soviet Union, and later sponsored, and traveled with, the SUNY theater group that performed in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

In his seven years as the chancellor of the state university system, under then Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Ernest Boyer also learned astute political skills. He became an adept performer in the state political arena, testifying before the state legislature in Albany, working the bureaucracy. And as the youngest and arguably the most dynamic chancellor in the nation, with experience in the country's largest postsecondary educational system, Chancellor Boyer was naturally looked to as a national spokesman on the emerging challenges of higher education. He became a source for new ideas and innovative plans to serve America's students. Beginning in 1974, he also worked diligently as a three-year member of the board of directors of the American Council on Education.

"Without doubt, Ernie Boyer has been the towering intellectual giant of American education over the last quarter of a century," Robert H. Atwell, former president of the American Council for Education, said recently. "His influence on every aspect of the nation's schools and colleges has been extensive and profound."

His counsel was likewise sought by those across a wide political spectrum. Presidents Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, and Jimmy Carter all appointed him to serve on their national education commissions.

Newly elected President Carter looked to Ernest Boyer to become his U.S. Commissioner of Education, a post in which Boyer served until 1979. In that post, Boyer passionately articulated the need for policies to give children who needed it a helping hand. He called for greater access, equity for all

students, and excellence in all the nations' public schools.

Commissioner Boyer was concerned about all students, President Carter recalled, noting, "He feared that too many young people felt unwanted, unneeded, and unconnected to the larger world. He argued that American schools must be places that help students understand the meaning of their lives and connect them to their community." Commissioner Boyer, President Carter said, "not only advocated community service projects for students, but he also advocated an increased dedication to public service by university faculty. Scholarship, in his opinion, must include application of knowledge, as well as research, teaching, and integration of knowledge."

To increase efficiency and service to students, Boyer, as commissioner, cut red tape in the colossal federal education agency and reduced the number of forms schools and colleges had to fill out to receive grants. He went after student loan defaulters so more money would be available to students in need. He also argued for a reduction in bureaucratic jargon, and he became known for turning bureaucratic doublespeak into clear prose. He convened forums to get divergent groups talking again about how to improve schools and enhance learning. He even offered a course, and then taught it once a week, on communication skills, and established an internal Horace Mann Center for the ongoing education of federal education bureaucrats.

"We sought to give all Americans the opportunity to achieve a good education," President Carter said recently about their time working together. "I am proud that we more than doubled federal support for schools, providing special funds to districts with large numbers of disadvantaged students, and making available grants and loans that made it possible for every qualified student to have an opportunity to attend college."

The former president noted that Commissioner Boyer "won the respect of people at every level of education, from preschool to graduate school. Teachers, students, administrators, and parents all learned that he understood and sympathized with their hopes and needs. He earned their trust, and believed that it was essential for the educational system as a whole to regain the trust of the American people."

Boyer was the last commissioner of education in the old U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare before the agency was divided and his post was elevated to presidential cabinet rank in 1979.

"Ernie Boyer was a wise man," declared President Carter. "I will always be grateful for his extraordinary contributions during my administration and for having his wise counsel. He has set an example of leadership that I trust will be emulated by future generations of educators."

IN 1979, ERNEST BOYER BECAME THE PRESIDENT of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. He established a home for the Foundation at 5 Ivy Lane, in Princeton, New Jersey, but he maintained an office in Washington, D.C., to keep a hand on the pulse of the policy developed in the nation's capital. He launched his own research agenda, which ultimately led to a comprehensive examination of education in the United States and abroad from preschool through college. His work yielded groundbreaking studies that over time affected every level of schooling in America.

During Boyer's tenure, the Foundation issued reports on a wide variety of topics, including the condition of teaching, school reform, and faculty and campus life both in the United States and internationally. Many of the reports were translated into other languages, including Japanese, Spanish, and Chinese.

Boyer also represented The Carnegie Foundation on the boards of numerous educational institutions, including American College Testing, the Aspen Institute, Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian, and the Council on Economic Development. Building on his lifelong commitment to the arts, he became a trustee of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center as well as chairman of the board of directors of Very Special Arts. He also chaired the board of directors of the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education and served on the board of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Boyer was also a sought-after speaker, an international as well as a national advocate for children and teachers. He moved audiences with eloquent speeches he delivered from coast to coast and around the world. He was "an

evangelist of education," said Mr. Atwell. Boyer "never tired of carrying his message of the importance of education, and of its improvement, to any audience, at any time, in any place."

Mr. Atwell added that his work at The Carnegie Foundation was "seminal." "Millions of students have benefited from his vision."

ERNEST BOYER WAS A TRUE "WORDSMITH." He revered both the oral and written language and, through the words he spoke and wrote, he clarified his ideas and transmitted them to as many people as he could. He significantly shaped the policy debates of his time, largely by finding the common ground and making new connections—between people, between institutions, between political ideologies, between countries.

The first Carnegie report published during his tenure was an essay he wrote with Arthur Levine in 1981 called *A Quest for Common Learning: The Aims of General Education*. The essay proposed that general education at the college level become more integrated, stressing "those experiences, relationships, and ethical concerns that are common to all of us simply by virtue of our membership in the human family at a particular moment in history." This call for greater integrations and connections between the disciplines was to be a recurring theme in his other reports through the years.

In 1983, Boyer's first comprehensive study at The Carnegie Foundation, *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America*, was published by Harper & Row and was praised nationally as a landmark analysis of the disturbing academic practices in the nation's public high schools. It helped shape the debate of the emerging school reform movement not just by earmarking the problems, but also by making specific recommendations for improvement. Boyer knew that by stressing excellence for all students, by raising expectation and graduation requirements, by making teacher training more rigorous, and by lengthening and restructuring the school day, we could save our public high schools and create a more meaningful learning experience for our students.

Ernest Boyer found the good with the bad in high schools, and his words echo today: "Our schools have adjusted successfully to a host of new demands. They now serve more students from different racial, cultural, and social backgrounds. They have responded to enrollment declines and budget cuts. Experimental programs, such as magnet schools, have been introduced, and public schools are now educating vast numbers of handicapped students who previously were locked out. There remains, however, a large, even alarming gap between school achievement and the task to be accomplished."

Boyer insisted that "high school" should stand for something, that our schools should cease giving credit for mall-style electives or "business math," that they should establish a solid core curriculum of four years of English, with a greater emphasis on writing, two years of algebra, and history in place of "social studies," and that they should toughen standards. He argued that students needed smaller schools because "too often when students 'drop out,' no one noticed that they had, in fact, 'dropped in.'"

He carefully and persuasively explained to the nation that education requires sustained attention to the individual child and adolescent, and maintained that society has a moral obligation to make sure every student gets that kind of attention. With assistance from the Atlantic Richfield Corporation, The Carnegie Foundation then funded 225 high school projects across the nation to stimulate real school reform.

In his next study, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, published in 1987 by Harper & Row, Ernest Boyer again put one of the nation's institutions under his critical yet caring gaze. He found far too many college students shortchanged by the faculty's obligation to conduct research over teaching. He contended that the nation must put more resources into undergraduate education, expand orientation and faculty mentoring for new students, and create community service programs for students. *The Christian Science Monitor* called it "the most thorough look at undergraduate colleges ever taken."

In the report, Boyer pointed out: "The undergraduate experience, at its best, also means encouraging students

to be active rather than passive learners. In measuring the quality of a college one should ask if the institution has a climate that encourages independent, self-directed study. Is priority given to the required lower-division classes? Is teaching more than lecturing? Do general education courses have small discussion sessions in which students work together on group assignments? Are undergraduate courses taught by the most respected and gifted teachers on campus? Because much learning occurs outside the classroom, it is important to know how accessible faculty are to their students, through office hours, to be sure, but also elsewhere on the campus."

Boyer also connected the world of learning in the classroom to the world outside. In both *High School and College*, he argued that students needed to be engaged in community service. This idea was promulgated throughout schools and communities and in some states such as Maryland, legislation was introduced to promote student service.

In its 1990 "The Best of America" citations, *U.S. News & World Report* gave Ernest Boyer its "Excellence Award in Education," calling him "a major force in education reform." The magazine explained that "his reports *High School* and *College* have helped to bring back the core curriculum, upgrade the teaching profession, and reinforce the importance of schools as seedbeds of democratic ideals. These are among the reasons more than 400 education experts we surveyed singled out Boyer for excellence."

ERNEST BOYER CONTINUED to look for ways institutions of higher learning could strengthen the spirit of community. In 1990, The Carnegie Foundation released *Campus Life: In Search of Community*. Realizing that every student comes to college with his or her own special skills and interests, Boyer saw that the old ideal of a special campus community was disappearing. But, the report argued, "if a balance can be struck between individual interests and shared concerns, a strong learning community will result. We believe the six principles highlighted in this report—purposefulness, openness, justice, discipline, caring, and celebration—can form the foundation on which a vital community of learning can be built. Now, more than ever, colleges and universities should be guided by a larger vision."

Boyer's dedication to improving postsecondary institutions was again called into play as he examined the subject further in the groundbreaking 1990 study, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, published by The Carnegie Foundation. In it, Boyer wrote: "At the very heart of the current debate [about higher education]—the single concern around which all others pivot—is the issue of faculty time. What's really being called into question is the reward system and the key issue is this: what activities of the professoriate are most highly prized? After all, it's futile to talk about improving the quality of teaching if, in the end, faculties are not given recognition for the time they spend with students.

"In the current climate, students all too often are the losers," he added. "Today, undergraduates are aggressively recruited. In the glossy brochures, they're assured that teaching is important, that a spirit of community pervades the campus, and that general education is the core of the undergraduate experience. But the reality is that, on far too many campuses, teaching is not well rewarded, and faculty who spend too much time counseling and advising students may diminish their prospects for tenure and promotion."

This highly influential study sparked debate in faculty and administrative circles on campuses nationwide. Campus-wide seminars were organized around the topic. The report became a Carnegie Foundation bestseller and continues to shape the debate about the meaning of scholarship.

BUT SOMETHING ELSE had been on Ernie Boyer's mind for a long time. "Education is a seamless web," he liked to say. "One level of learning relates to every other." For years he had argued that the most promising prospects for true education reform lie in the first years of life and of learning. "What we urgently need is a plan of action," he frequently said in challenging the nation. "If little children do not have a good beginning, it's almost impossible to compensate later on."

Under President Bush, Boyer had been appointed to the National Education Goals Panel established to

examine how to reach the nation's six education goals outlined at the historic 1989 Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, which he'd also attended as a participant. Boyer was named Chair of the Advisory Panel on School Readiness. By 1991 he had his own answer for the country on how it could reach the first national education goal that all children would come to school "ready to learn" by the year 2000. His report, *Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation*, published by The Carnegie Foundation, called for ensuring that all children have a healthy start, empowered parents, quality preschool, a responsive workplace for parents, television as a teacher, neighbor-hoods for learning, and connections across the generations, "all of the forces that have such a profound impact on children's lives and shape their readiness to learn." This, he said, is, without question, the right of every child.

Ready to Learn also called for the initiation of programs to educate parents of preschool children in every state; the guarantee of a Head Start preschool experience for all low-income children in the nation; the creation of preschool learning and health centers in poor neighborhoods; television networks that would set time aside each week for quality preschool educational programming; the neighborhood as a place for learning for young people; and connecting the generations to teach and rejuvenate each other.

Dr. Boyer found it a national disgrace that nearly one quarter of the nation's children, surrounded by billions of dollars in investments, still grow up in poverty, and warned that the nation would reap what it sows if it does not respond to the *Ready to Learn* agenda.

"If Ernie had his way," said Senator Edward M. Kennedy, "every child would have a good breakfast and a warm hand to hold on their way to school in the morning."

The Carnegie Foundation study led directly to Senator Kennedy's own "Ready to Learn" legislation seeking to reach this first national education goal. It also sparked new television programming with the Learning Channel's "Ready, Set, Learn" and the Ready to Learn Act of 1994 (Public Law 102-545), landmark legislation that provided new television programming for the preschool age set. And this year, as a result of the report and the subsequent initiatives by public television to implement Ready to Learn television programming, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, in conjunction with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, sponsored the first of a series of Ernest L. Boyer Technology Summits for Educators around the country.

"More than anyone of his time," said Senator Kennedy, "he taught us that it is children, not just the schools, that should be the focus of our concern; that education is a community-wide effort which begins with the birth of a child; that supporting education is, more than any other challenge, not an expenditure but an investment; and that failure to act now will surely later mean higher costs, wasted lives, promises unfulfilled."

FOUR YEARS AFTER THE PUBLICATION of *Ready to Learn*, Ernest Boyer released another call to the nation to focus attention on the early years. *The Basic School: A Community for Learning*, published by The Carnegie Foundation in 1995, set forth another bold plan, this time to reinvigorate learning in the first years of formal schooling. It called for treating the school as a community with a shared vision, teachers as leaders, and parents as partners; a curriculum with coherence that incorporated eight "core commonalities," and new means for measuring progress; a climate for learning with varied patterns of grouping children, resources to enrich learning, and essential services for children and their families. Finally, he called for a renewal of a commitment to character, one that teaches core virtues and living with purpose.

In this report, as in others, he championed the arts, here arguing that the arts were frequently the first language of a child. In fact, so impassioned were his pleas over the years for a greater emphasis on the arts in schools, he was regarded by those in arts circles—from Jacques D'Amboise to Beverly Sills to Jane Alexander at the National Endowment for the Arts—as the most powerful voice on the arts in education.

As a result of The Carnegie Foundation research on the elementary years, Boyer decided to translate his thoughts about primary education into action and stimulate real change in schools by founding The Basic School

Network, a pilot program comprising sixteen public and private elementary schools, organized in partnership with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and with funding from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. The Network, initiated in 1994 with a three-year commitment by the Foundation, has worked with school personnel on all of the components of the Basic School, including new ways to create a curriculum, stress language (which he always saw as including the "languages" of the arts and mathematics), rethink the use of technology, emphasize character building, and involve parents in their schools.

In commenting about the sweep of his work, Samuel G. Sava, executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals and partner in the Basic School Network, said that Ernest Boyer "was the foremost educator of our time."

In the preface to *The Basic School*, Boyer wrote: "As I think about this long journey, I am greatly encouraged by the vitality of the elementary school, by the dedication of principals and teachers, and most especially by their willingness to change. It seems clear to me that the elementary school is the most flexible level of formal learning, a place where the focus is on children, not on "the system" or promoting one's career. It was a first-grade teacher in Dayton, Ohio, who sparked my own love affair with language, and it is my deepest hope that *The Basic School* will be of help to the dedicated elementary principals and teachers who each day serve so selflessly our nation's children."

UNDER PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN, Secretary of State George P. Schultz appointed Boyer chair of the U. S. Department of State's Overseas Schools Advisory Council. Boyer then extended his work from Kuala Lumpur to Athens, from London to the Far East, and also to Australia, Europe, and West Africa. In October 1996, the Association of American Schools of Central America, Columbia-Caribbean, and Mexico, on behalf of the U.S. Department of State, presented The Paul G. Orr Award to The Carnegie Foundation for Dr. Ernest L. Boyer's "distinguished educational leadership for American schools around the world."

The citation read: "Service was Dr. Boyer's creed as he tirelessly crisscrossed the nation and the world on behalf of improving education for all. He saw learning in its largest context, not simply to train students for the job market, but for preparing coming generations for civic responsibility to ensure that democracy is well-served. In our generation, indeed in this century, few, if any, educators have stood taller than Dr. Ernest L. Boyer. We reflect on his stunning legacy to the nation and the world."

Another of Ernest Boyer's international achievements was a partnership with the National Center for Education Development Research in Beijing. This nearly ten-year collaboration resulted in exchanges between the People's Republic of China and the United States that included educators and policy experts at the highest level.

Boyer's influence was such that 165 colleges and universities awarded him honorary degrees, including the University of Beijing, posthumously in April 1996. (He was reputedly the recipient of more honorary degrees than anyone in U.S. history.) His voice was also heard through his columns for the education supplements of *The Times of London* and *Change* magazine. And he served as a senior fellow at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, where he taught five policy courses from 1985 to 1990. In 1993, he also advised Princeton University in drafting its Strategic Planning Report.

Boyer received many awards during his tenure as Foundation president, including the Distinguished Service Medal, Teachers College, Columbia University; the Horatio Alger Award; the Encyclopedia Britannica *Achievement in Life* Award; the President's Medal, Tel Aviv University; and the James B. Conant Award for Leadership in Education. In 1993, he was elected a Fellow in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. And in 1995, he received the Charles Frankel Prize in the Humanities, a presidential citation, from President Clinton, who declared that the Carnegie Foundation president was a "powerful voice, nationally and internationally, for excellence in service."

Also in 1995, Boyer was awarded The Harold W. McGraw, Jr., Prize in Education, which recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge through education.

IN THE END, ERNEST BOYER was dedicated to a few basic tenets, among them, the belief that all children could learn and all children could succeed, regardless of their backgrounds. Whatever the level of schooling, Boyer fully recognized that "schools cannot do the job alone. You cannot have an island of excellence in a sea of indifference."

He argued that a "Commitment to education will help all students to be involved in the civic future of the nation—to vote in elections, to serve on juries, to be concerned about the health of their communities—to ensure that democracy will, with vitality, succeed."

A believer in the American Dream, he was a man of strong convictions. "Dreams can be fulfilled only when they've been defined," he would say. And in countless speeches he would assert that "the tragedy is not death. The tragedy is to die with commitments undefined, convictions undeclared, and service unfulfilled."

Ernest Boyer espoused a love of children and teachers and constantly reminded the long string of reporters always soliciting his comments and advice to keep in mind that educational institutions are about people, and that the promise of public education is to fulfill the American promise. "It is wrong to make promises to children and then walk away," he would say.

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley has said: "Ernie was in many ways education's best friend. Education's own Mr. Fix-it.... His prolific body of writings will endure as a legacy of his passion for and commitment to teaching and learning."

In his eulogy for Boyer, Robert Hochstein, a close colleague and longtime assistant at HEW and later at The Carnegie Foundation, noted how Boyer was intensely concerned about the appropriate settings for meetings. To this end, he would often fret about the spatial arrangements in a room, and then move the seating accordingly. It was a physical act, curious to some, yet it was symbolic of his ability to rearrange ideas, as well as people's thinking. The room arrangements functioned as his way of providing intimacy for discourse, Mr. Hochstein noted, to get people out of preconceived, fixed notions. To think anew. His books, reports, policy papers, and speeches all had a similar purpose.

Hochstein said, "Ernie was a practical visionary. He advised governors, presidents, and world leaders on the issues and particularly the details of education, and in my view was the most influential educator in America in this century. Of course, it was a privilege, an honor, to work by his side."

DR. BOYER PASSED AWAY on December 8, 1995. During his valiant three-year struggle with cancer, he never stopped working. He took telephone calls the day before he died. Despite his pain, he told his brother Paul, "he felt more intellectually alive and productive than he had for a long time." Indeed, Boyer always had a "zest for life," Paul Boyer added, "and the courage and spirit he displayed in the last few weeks will always remain an inspiration."

Ernest Boyer's life work was dedicated to the American ideals of public education. When he died, President and Mrs. Clinton expressed the sentiments of the many thousands he had reached: "This nation has lost one of its most dedicated and influential education reformers. Ernest Boyer was a distinguished scholar and educator whose work will help students well into the next century. ... The greatest tribute that we can pay him is to carry on the work to which he devoted his life: to bring down the barriers that prevent our young people from succeeding and to ensure that each of our citizens has an equal share of the American Dream."

It was while working on *The Basic School*, which he regarded as the capstone of his work, near what would be the end of his life, that Ernest Boyer discovered a quote from the Jewish leader Abraham Joshua Heschel that so well expressed his own feelings that he used it to conclude his book. Heschel, when asked what message he had for young people, replied: "I would say, 'Let them remember that there is a meaning beyond absurdity. Let them be sure that every little deed counts, that every word has power, and that we can—every one—do our share to redeem the

world in spite of all absurdities and all frustrations and all disappointments. And above all, remember that the meaning of life is to build a life as if it were a work of art."¹

Ernest L. Boyer lived by this philosophy, and his life will live on in our memories as an inspiring work of art.

¹ Robert K Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 250.