

FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF DAVID R. MAINES

Edited by Shing-Ling S. Chen

STUDIES IN SYMBOLIC
INTERACTION

VOLUME 57

FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF
DAVID R. MAINES

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EDITED BY

SHING-LING S. CHEN
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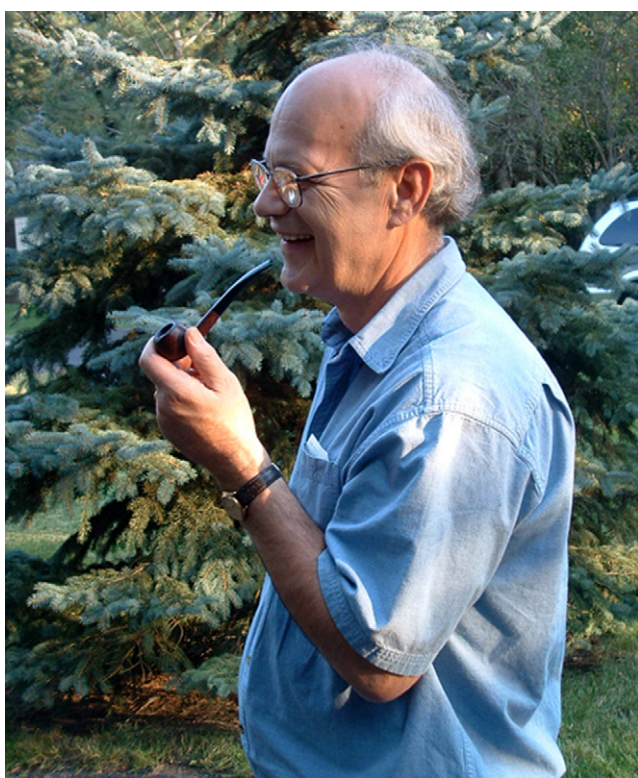
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Albert J. Meehan is a Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan where he served as the Department Chair from 2006 to 2015. His primary research focus is on police practices using ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (EMCA). He has published research on police record-keeping practices, policing the mentally ill, policing juveniles, community policing, the use and impact of information technologies in law enforcement and racial profiling. Currently he is examining police–citizen interaction in traffic and street stops and deadly force encounters using body-worn and in car camera data and how video evidence is used in the trials of officer-involved shootings.

Joel O. Powell recently completed two terms on the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training. He is currently the Professional Peace Officer Education Coordinator at Minnesota State University Moorhead.

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Rebecca Maines Scheer is the sister of the late David Maines. She graduated from Ball State University with a BA in English, and Indiana University with a Master's in Library Science. She taught English for 35 years at Marion High School, the school from which she and David both graduated. In addition to her teaching duties, she was the advisor for *Reflections*, the school literary magazine, and also sponsored an animal club called PAWS. She is currently retired but keeps quite busy as a life member and Secretary of the Marion NAACP and a board member of SOS, Save Our Stories, which is a local organization that works

with Indiana Landmarks in dedication to historical preservation within the community.

Jim Thomas is a Professor emeritus at Northern Illinois University, whose research was primarily ethnographic with an occasional bit quantitative analysis or multi-methods. His data-based publications were heavily focused in the area of criminal justice, especially prisons. He taught sociological theory and qualitative methods for 30 years, and in the final decade prior to semi-retirement in 2007 was involved in major correctional organizations in which he served as board member or on numerous committees of the Correctional Accreditation Managers Association, American Correctional Association, and Illinois Correctional Association. He met David Maines in the late 1970s.

Jeffery T. Ulmer is a Professor of Sociology and Criminology at Penn State University, and serves as Director of the Criminal Justice Research Center. He received his PhD in sociology in 1993 from Penn State University. While in graduate school at Penn State, Ulmer took courses from David Maines, served as Maines' editorial assistant while he edited *Symbolic Interaction*, and benefitted even more Maines' informal mentorship. Ulmer's research has focused on state and federal courts and disparities in criminal sentencing, and in capital murder cases. He has also published impactful research on criminological theory and symbolic interactionism, religion and crime, and race, disadvantage, and violence rates. He was named a Fellow of the American Society of Criminology in 2021, and received the 2001 Distinguished New Scholar Award and the 2012 Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology's Division on Corrections and Sentencing. He and coauthors won the American Society of Criminology's 2012 Outstanding Article Award and the ASC's 2006 Hindelang Award for *Confessions of a Dying Thief: Understanding Criminal Careers and Illegal Enterprise* (2005, Transaction).

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VOLUME EDITOR PREFACE

David R. Maines (1940–2021), one of the most important sociological scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, constructed a vast area of research to advance the field of symbolic interactionism during his career. As a premier symbolic interactionist, Maines provided not only abundant theoretical contributions, but also numerous empirical insights as he examined a wide range of topics. Maines left behind a significant body of work to guide generations of symbolic interactionists in their research endeavors. This volume documents some of Maines's most celebrated areas of scholarship – social structure, narrative sociology, social interaction, dialectic perspective, temporality, and mesostructure.

The importance of a person can be measured by the void left behind by his passing, experienced by the people around him. This volume also includes stories by individuals, associated with Maines via kinship, friendship, or professional relationship. Maines cultivated deep relationships with people around him, as all the stories evolve around a narrative structure that characterizes Maines as a loving sibling, a helpful colleague, a caring mentor, and a wonderful friend. Maines's passing left a major vacuum permanently for people around him.

To reflect Maines's interest in continuously advancing the field of symbolic interactionism with cutting edge research, two new empirical studies are included in this volume as well.

Shing-Ling S. Chen

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PART I

FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF DAVID
R. MAINES

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DAVID R. MAINES AND HIS COLLABORATIVE CIRCLES: A REMEMBRANCE

Jeffery T. Ulmer

ABSTRACT

David R. Maines was a founder of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, a fierce defender and practitioner of interactionist sociology, and cross-disciplinary pioneer, bridging sociology and communication research in the study of narrative. He invariably gathered collaborative circles of colleagues and students around him wherever his intellectual travels took him. Here, I recall the collaborative circle that formed with him at its center at Penn State in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This was a time of both personal and professional turmoil for David, and also prolific scholarly achievement. I then introduce other contributions to this volume that feature others' remembrances and appreciations of David's life and work.

Keywords: Symbolic interactionism; collaborative circles; communication studies; narrative; mentorship; scholarly networks; academic careers

The story is well known. In 1905, Albert Einstein published five articles that transformed not only physics but all of human thought. At the time, he was a marginal patent clerk in Bern, Switzerland. His work seemingly came out of nowhere, from a mind isolated from the institutions of higher thought where such work was supposed to come from ([Restivo, 2020](#)).

Yet his work did not come from nowhere. Less well known is that Einstein was embedded in a group of former classmates and friends that formed what [Farrell \(2001\)](#) calls a “collaborative circle.” Among this collaborative circle was Einstein’s wife Mileva Marić, a strong mathematician in her own right, fellow physics classmates Marcel Grossman and Michael Besso, and friends he met in Bern, philosophy student Maurice Solovine, and mathematics students Conrad

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and Paul Habicht (Isaacson, 2007). They jokingly called themselves The Olympia Academy, delighting in the ironically lofty title. Solovine even drew a crest for the group; it featured the members surrounded by a garland of sausages and beer mugs (Isaacson, 2007).

Collaborative circles are “a primary group of friends and colleagues who establish a ritual of meeting regularly to discuss their work and to socialize with one another, as both colleagues and friends” (Farrell, 2021, p. 471). They bounce ideas off one another, discuss innovative ways of approaching their work, and develop a shared creative vision (Farrell, 2021). Einstein’s publications in his “miracle year” of 1905 came out of this stew of creativity among his collaborative circle of the Olympia Academy. Einstein’s now famous letter to fellow Olympia Academician Conrad Habicht captures the flavor of their serious intellectual exchanges wrapped in teasing banter (Isaacson, 2007, p. 93):

Habicht,

Such a solemn air of silence has descended between us that I almost feel as if I am committing a sacrilege when I break it now with some inconsequential babble. . . . So, what are you up to, you frozen whale? You smoked, dried, canned piece of soul, or whatever else I would like to hurl at your head, filled as I am with 70% anger and 30% pity! You have only the latter 30% to thank for my not having sent you a can full of minced onions and garlic after you so cravenly did not show up on Easter. But why have you not sent me your dissertation? Don’t you know that I am one of the 1½ fellows who would read it with interest and pleasure, you wretched man? In return, I promise you four papers in return. . . .

The papers Einstein was referring to were his work on energy quanta and the photoelectric effect, molecular motion and atomic vibration, and special relativity and the equation of matter and energy. These would redirect human history.

I review this story of Einstein and his collaborative circle not to compare my mentor David R. Maines to Albert Einstein, but to recall the many collaborative circles that had him at their center. The letter from Einstein to Habicht strikes me as *exactly* the tone of David’s letters and emails to me over the years (with perhaps a bit more profanity!), and no doubt his correspondence with all of his collaborative circles. David formed intellectual collaborative circles, invariably centered around symbolic interactionism, wherever he went. The chapters in this festschrift are just a few of the products and remembrances of those circles.

David published over 70 refereed articles and dozens of chapters and reviews. He wrote two books, his *The Faultline of Consciousness* (2001) and *Transforming Catholicism: Liturgical Change in the Vatican II Church* (2007) coauthored with Michael McCallion. He edited seven other volumes, including the outstanding and theoretically meaty 1991 festschrift for Anselm Strauss, *Social Organization and Social Process*, and Herbert Blumer’s posthumous and profound *Industrialization as an Agent of Social Change* (1990), with Thomas Morrione. He also created and served as chief editor for the book series *Communication and Social Order* (Aldine de Gruyter).

From the beginning of his career, Maines fought against characterizations of symbolic interactionism as a structural and “subjectivist.” He was a champion

of the notion that symbolic interactionism offered vital perspectives on the study of social structure and organization, and that it was compatible with a variety of research methods. Later, he played a vital role in developing narrative sociology, bringing theoretical work on narrative from communication studies to sociological audiences. As he describes in [Maines \(1997\)](#), he played an essential role in the founding of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction (SSSI). He and others who founded SSSI wanted to institutionalize and preserve the perspective, creating a forum for symbolic interactionist proponents could speak for and represent the perspective themselves rather than having it defined by others, and to foster new directions of symbolic interactionist empirical work. Maines edited *Symbolic Interaction* from 1989–1992. In 1999, he received SSSI's highest recognition, the George Herbert Mead Award, and received many other awards throughout his career, too many to list here. In 2002, the Carl Couch Center for Social and Internet Research established the Maines Award for contributions to narrative research.

I have written more extensively about David's scholarly legacy and distinctive sociology in *Symbolic Interaction* ([Ulmer, 2023](#)), so I will only summarize here. David was born May 6, 1940 in Anderson, Indiana, and graduated from Marion High School, where he lettered in football and wrestling and was voted "Most Congenial." He graduated with a B.A. in sociology and anthropology from Ball State University in 1967. He attended Ball State off and on and while working with his father as a plasterer as he and his first wife, Mahin D. Maines-Mayer raised their small children, David E. and Monda. He earned his PhD in sociology in 1973 from the University of Missouri, under his mentor and lifelong friend, Robert Habenstein. He then embarked on a multi-year NIMH Postdoctoral Fellowship, working with Gregory Stone at the University of Minnesota and William J. Goode at Columbia University. From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, he held research and teaching positions at Hunter College, Upsala College, Yale University, Northwestern University, University of Illinois at Chicago, and the University of Iowa. From 1986–1991, David came to Penn State University as a fixed term, untenured Associate Professor, and then assumed a similar position at Wayne State University from 1991–1997. Oakland University gave him his happiest and last academic home, as Professor and Chair before retiring as Professor Emeritus in 2008.

After David's divorce from his first wife, David obtained a research position at the University of Iowa, where he met and cohabited with Mari Molseed, one of Carl Couch's students. Mari obtained a teaching position at Penn State University, and David relocated to State College to live with her and her two children. His time at Penn State was painful both personally and professionally. *But David was on fire intellectually*. He would produce some of his most creative and consequential scholarship while at Penn State, as well as serving as a vital leader of the SSSI, overseeing its journal *Symbolic Interaction* in its transition to a quarterly publication, and starting his *Communication and Social Order* book series.

The Penn State sociology department of the late 1980s and early 1990s was not a pleasant place to work unless you were one of the elite senior faculty. The head

was an autocrat, and there were a handful of academic bullies who enforced a caricature of positivistic orthodoxy as a path to building what they thought was a “top tier” sociology department. They emphasized grant-driven secondary statistical analysis in demography and stratification. Several influential faculty looked askance at sociological theory in general, let alone symbolic interactionism. David was marginalized as a non-tenure-track associate professor member, yet his curriculum vitae, and his stature in American sociology, was at least the equal of most full professors.

But this toxic environment spurred David to deeply think about and articulate symbolic interactionism’s place in the larger discipline of sociology, and to combat rampant mischaracterizations of the perspective. Defending himself, he defended symbolic interactionism, and in defending interactionism, he defended his scholarly identity. He wrote with a fire that was, and is, uncommon in sociological writing.

I also believe that David was sustained and energized by the collaborative circle he gathered around himself in these years. We were a small group of graduate students from sociology, rural sociology, and communication studies, along with other departmentally marginalized assistant and associate professors. We met for a regular gathering happy hour on Thursday or Friday evenings at the Adam’s Apple Tavern in downtown State College. This was no mere happy hour. It was part seminar, part journal club, part group therapy, part soap opera, all wrapped up in irreverent humor. Other times, we would get together more spontaneously at David’s favorite pool hall, the Billiards and Brew (yes that was its actual name). David would alternate between holding court at our tables in the back, and dispatching opponents at the head pool table in the front where serious pool players challenged each other. These gatherings, I believe, gave David a space, an audience, and acolytes that fed his sociological and personal selves in a departmental environment that was alternately hostile and indifferent. We students, in turn, truly regarded him as a guru—which is a cliché, but no less true. He embodied the kind of sociologist and professor, in the classic sense of that word, we wanted to be.

But that is what David seems to have always done – gather people around him and enrich their minds and lives. He formed collaborative circles wherever he went. Jim Thomas’s chapter in this volume captures this:

With David, this was the norm. He was always accessible to the students who accompanied us to conferences, always willing to talk about baseball or pool, but then relate the topics to concrete substantive sociological themes. This is a rare and often under-rated skill in which he excelled. In all ways, his subtle mentoring and ability to connect with both students and peers will leave a void.

The chapters in this volume are testaments to other creative, collaborative friendships at different stages of David’s life. Albert Jay Meehan provides a remembrance of the intellectual climate and circumstances while David was at Wayne State University and especially Oakland University, the site of another key set of collaborative circles with David at the center. Meehan discusses Maine’s impact on graduate students at Wayne State, how he met his second wife

Linda Benson, and Maines' Chairship of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Oakland University. Shing-Ling Chen reviews David's many contributions to communication research, and how David was a pioneer at recognizing the common ground between sociology and communication, especially around narrative. She shows the continued relevance of David's narrative research to contemporary political and societal events, such as the election of Donald Trump and the competing, discordant narratives surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jim Thomas divides Maines' contributions to sociology into three main parts: As colleague, as mentor, and as scholar. He argues that the roles of colleague and mentor are subtle and often unrecognized, but shape scholarship profoundly. Thomas also refers to David as "the Johnny Appleseed of Interactionism," as he planted "the intellectual seeds of curiosity, clarity, and enthusiasm for his ideas everywhere he went, nurtured them, and then moved on."

Similarly, Michael Katovich compares Maines to Georg Simmel's *Stranger*, as one who fits into a community, but also as one who remains distant from that community. Katovich describes how Maines did not attach himself to any one branch or school of symbolic interactionism, but drew from all, and produced his own distinctive perspective. Katovich uses the television series *Dopesick* as a way to substantiate Maines' theoretical interest in social structure and the activities involved in the process of getting structurally situated.

William Rawlins' chapter celebrates his friendship with David and presents some of their correspondence over the years. Rawlins recalls David's expert mentoring and editing of his book *Friendship Matters* (1992), and how Rawlins later realized poignant connections between David's and his own experiences as friends in their later years. Powell and Fitzpatrick apply Maines' narrative conceptualizations along with Carl Couch's forms of social relations to viral videos of police violence and conflicting narratives over their meaning. Rawlin's former PhD student Elaine Bass Jenks recalls her meeting David Maines at Penn State and his mentorship, along with that of Rawlins. Her essay honors the opportunity to learn with David Maines over the past 35 years. Jenks connects her research on communication and disability to Maines' narrative concepts, and incorporates Rawlins' exploration of similarity and difference.

EPILOGUE

When David retired, he gave away his huge scholarly library to friends, colleagues, and undergraduate sociology departments. He virtually stopped writing in scholarly venues and stopped going to professional meetings. David was tired of intellectual battling, and wanted to, at long last, relax. In these years, he was the most contented and at peace that I ever knew him. David lived happily and comfortably with his loving wife of 26 years, Dr. Linda Benson, a history professor at Oakland University. In retirement, David found some new passions and rediscovered old ones. He traveled, sharpened his pool and golf games, bought his dream guitar, and continued writing songs and poetry. He learned to draw,

publishing a beautiful book of sketches. David ultimately started practicing Buddhism as another way to help others and find meaning in all life. David died on November 24, 2021, in peace in his home in Rochester Hills, Michigan, among the deer, rabbits, and birds he delighted in feeding on his forested property. Though the excitement of my time in David's Penn State collaborative circle is central to my intellectual identity to this day, that is how I prefer to think of David now: contented on the deck of his Michigan home, sketching, playing guitar, or conversing with Linda, gazing out at his woods, pipe and bottle of Sam Adams by his side.

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