

Robert W. Hetherington (1936 - 2012)

(Tribute read at Arts Faculty Council (November 22, 2012) by Professor Frank Trovato)

Robert W. Hetherington was born in 1936 in Saskatchewan. He received his BA from the University of Saskatchewan in the late 1950s and went on to complete an MA and a PhD at Yale University. During the 1960s he was employed as a Research Scientist at the School of Public Health, University of California. His career then took him to Rockville, Maryland where he spent more than a decade as a Senior Researcher in the National Center for Health Services. Dr. Hetherington was recruited to the University of Alberta as a Full Professor in 1983 to help the Sociology department build strength in the area of medical sociology.

Dr. Hetherington's earlier employment in health science research units had largely involved quantitative analysis of large data sets to examine health care costs and efficiencies, and organizational design issues. After joining the University of Alberta's sociology department, he had more opportunities to pursue theoretical questions. For example, while one of his co-authored papers in 1969 in a publication called *Inquiry* analyzed how long it took to get responses to mailed questionnaires about health insurance, a co-authored paper with a former PhD student (Soma Hewa) in 1995 in *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* discussed the emergence of a "mechanistic view of the human body in Western medicine" through the lens of Max Weber's theory of rationalization.

Professor Hetherington spent 18 years in the Department of Sociology. He served as Acting Associate Chair (Undergraduate) in 1999-2000, and chaired the department's Research Ethics Committee for a number of years during the 1990s. He retired in 2001. Towards the end of his university career, no doubt influenced by two young sons, he became heavily involved in coaching minor

league hockey and running summer hockey camps for children. He continued to pursue this passion for another decade after he retired with one of his sons eventually joining him in managing a large organization that coordinated an annual series of hockey camps and a minor hockey league with a large number of teams.

Dr. Hetherington died on October 17, 2012 after a lengthy illness. His four children, and some of his 10 grandchildren attended a memorial service in Edmonton on October 27, along with other family members and friends, four colleagues from the Sociology department, and about 40 young men wearing hockey sweaters, all former participants in Dr. Hetherington's hockey camps and leagues.