

# Retiring Professor Advocates a Reformation for Sociology

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STAFF REPORTER

Loren Reichert was in the parking garage of an office building leaning against a pillar, smoking a cigarette.

Wearing old jeans, Wellington boots and a leather jacket, he said "I didn't really look like I belonged there. I was in serious need of a haircut."

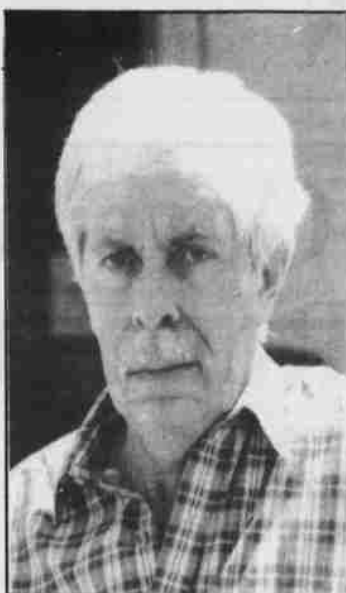
The former assistant professor and current part-time professor of sociology told this story of an occasion when he was mistaken for a mugger to his Sociology 101 students as an example of communication gone awry.

Other things have gone awry for Reichert, who came to UNLV in August of '69. He officially retired last spring. After teaching 28 years, he said he was ready to try something new. However, no one in the sociology department was willing to teach his theory courses on short notice, so as a favor, he said, he agreed to teach Classical Sociological Theory in the fall. When no one was located to teach the spring counterpart, Modern Sociological Theory, he agreed.

"Since I had never planned on teaching that one ever again, with a measure of fear and loathing I said yeah, okay. Fear and loathing because I had already psychologically put that one out of my head. I thought the fat lady had sung."

And, she has sung. Reichert said his replacement has been hired, and May 13 will mark his departure from teaching at the university.

While Reichert said he has seen many changes in the campus over the years, he has mixed feelings about what he has witnessed. Campus expansion, added resources, improved graduate instruction and an infinitely



Loren Reichert

better library are pluses that Reichert lists. On the downside, however, he sees little spillover into undergraduate education.

"Twenty-five years ago this was an undergraduate teaching school. That's what we did. Because that is what we did, that is what we got paid to do, and that is what we got credit for doing, I think we put a lot into it. As the university has grown its gotten more 'big time', but as a result the name of the game changed. There are really very few rewards for being a good undergraduate instructor."

Apparently, Reichert is good at undergraduate instruction. Veona Hunsinger, sociology department secretary, said, "He was an excellent teacher." She added that he had a very dry sense of humor that surfaced in his exams and slapstick behaviors — tripping on his way into class. She said that Reichert served as undergraduate coordinator for the department for five years. "He was always there for the student," she elaborated.

Reichert has a vision of sociol-

ogy as a science. He did his doctorate dissertation in this area. He said he has never liked the extent to which sociology has been used as a political program.

He advocates a reformation in sociology. Beyond creating clones of university professors, he envisions a program that realizes a sociology degree gives a student the expertise to solve problems with applied research aimed at solving a problem for clients rather than a scholarly publication.

"I think there is a much bigger market for people in sociology than we realize," Reichert said. He adds that until recently, he was one of those people who are unaware of the possibilities for sociology graduates in the larger community. "We totally miss the boat of training students to go after those jobs."

Reichert maintains that market research is a sociological problem. "What are we teaching our students to do?" he asks. "Are we

teaching them to be well-educated unemployed people? Or, is imparting employable skills something that really we should do?"

In his "retirement", Reichert said, he is working as a consultant and partner at Knight & Leavitt Associates Research Services. He also reads a lot, mostly books about mountaineering, something he would like to do. He also related that he has recently discovered Rock and Rope, an indoor climbing gym, where he really "had a ball." In addition, he enjoys photography and watching television.

Reichert summed up his visions for sociology by saying he would like to attract students who have a real choice to make between sociology and systems engineering. He would like these students working with sociology. He added that this is where he sees new sociological theory emerging.

## Debate

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feminist issue could be re-cast in a wider range as a human issue, as a family issue, but they (feminists) are intent on stereotyping all women as victims.

"I have been surrounded by women (in the workplace) and benefited from their expertise all my life, and not one of them is a victim. The women I have worked with refuse to be viewed as victims."

Petersen closed his opening remarks with, "Feminists want to make people believe that they are victims of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment — women are victims. Date rape — women are victims."

Sexual harassment, Petersen

purports, "is all based on the stereotype designed to protect women" and has the effect of making women powerless when attempting to present all women as victims.

Ireland didn't seem miffed by the sexual direction of Petersen's remarks.

Undaunted, Ireland spoke up, introducing herself as the "late Patricia Ireland, thanks to TWA."

"The difference (between us) isn't really in ultimate goals, but perhaps in the style we choose to take to get there. I can't help but think of all the changes that have been made because of the feminist movement."

"The whole change for women is very dramatic and exciting," Ireland continued. "We started crisis centers and women's shelters — we changed the whole

culture. We changed the language, we tried to claim the right of women inside the home to work outside the home — to get the same respect at work. We changed job titles to firefighter, police officer, and letter carrier to try to get little girls be more likely to think of themselves in those roles."

Ireland mentioned Newt Gingrich's comment about Hillary Clinton by saying "Newt can't stand Hillary or any woman being in total control of herself."

The real difference in their viewpoints stems from Ireland's personal life. "I have personally experienced job discrimination, sexual harassment, and unwanted pregnancy first hand. Experience with those things gives me a different perspective."

According to Petersen, "The

real difference is that NOW purports to speak for all women. No organization on Earth purports to speak for all men. The idea that I should be lumped in with Newt Gingrich is completely idiotic. Them's fightin' words."

Ireland states "I don't believe it is male-bashing to realize that it is a benefit to be a man. There's an undeniable privilege that goes with the money. I want to see men and women treated equally. I want all women to see themselves as leaders."

One unidentified female student was booed by the audience when she accused *Playboy* of degrading women by emphasizing their bodies, not their brains. Peterson made it clear that women are in control of exploiting their own bodies. *Playboy* doesn't force anyone to do anything.

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