

Building a world community

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Canadian Edition

Published by the World Federalist Movement, a non-governmental organization that advocates more just and effective global governance through the application of the principles of democratic federalism to world affairs.

VOL.2, ISSUE 2
DECEMBER 2018

A Tribute: Joseph E. Schwartzberg, 1928 – 2018

by Nancy Dunlavy, Director, The Workable World Trust

Joseph E. Schwartzberg, Distinguished International Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota (USA), died on September 19, 2018, at the age of 90. He was an intellectual activist leader in the World Federalist Movement, having significant impact at the local, national and international levels. His outstanding book *Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World* was published in 2013 by the United Nations University Press and is one of the classic texts in the body of literature generated by our World Federalist Movement.

I knew Joe for the last sixteen years from our collaborative work in the Minnesota peace and justice community. I had the distinct privilege of working with him on an almost-daily basis for the last four years, first as Administrative Assistant and then as Director of the Workable World Trust, which he had created in 2014. Rather than reciting here Joe's many life accomplishments (see <https://www.workableworld.org/aboutthe-author.html>), I would like to give you a peek into "A Day in the Life of Joe Schwartzberg."

I would arrive at Joe's home most weekday afternoons just after lunch. If we had had any "days off" since our last work day, he would tell me what he had been reading or what filing or writing he had finished since I last saw him. I do not believe that Joe had any ability to just relax!

There were many days when he was excited about a new idea that came to him in the middle of the night. He wouldn't just tell me the idea; he would insist that we sit down right then and take action on it, such as write an opinion piece for the *New York Times* about a "global Marshal plan" for Syria, or send email messages to the deans at local universities to set up a date to create a "Twin Cities global governance and world citizenship consortium."

After these middle-of-the-night brainstorm ideas had been handled, Joe would ask me "What's on your agenda?" I learned very quickly that I'd better have my topics in priority order, because he wasn't going to listen to my entire list. He would want to handle whatever I first mentioned.

Those of you who have received email messages from Joe know how each one was beautifully composed, poetic and nuanced. He transcribed those to me on the spot. I marveled at his mastery of the use of words to make a point and move ideas forward.

Mid-afternoon we would have a tea and ginger cookie break. This was the time that I heard many stories about Joe's life, and learned that he had quite a sense of humor. How I now wish that I had taped those sessions!

In the midst of these now-treasured afternoons, Joe would need to change his oxygen tank, or find a cough drop, or replace the batteries in his hearing aids. Those distractions were bothersome to him, and he basically kept working throughout. And then, at the end of a very long afternoon, as if he had never said it before, he would exclaim "I think we got some important things accomplished today." Indeed, Joe! Indeed!

Here are excerpts from just a small sampling of the condolence messages received by Joe's family:

Bill Pace

Joe was one of the finest advocates for peace and justice and the rule of law in international affairs in our Movement. He spent decades wrestling with the challenges and working on viable proposals. His work on democratic global governance will be recognized for years to come. ... I will be forever inspired by the extraordinary courage, dignity and honesty Joe demonstrated in his last years of life.

Richard Ponzio

Joe has been a thought leader and generous benefactor of our movement, but it's his compassion, sincerity, limitless curiosity and appetite for new scholarship, quick wit, and sense of humor that will be most remembered among his friends and closest collaborators.

Andreas Bummel

Joe had a razor-sharp mind and to the end he kept considering ideas and projects that can help bringing the world on a better path. Joe was not only an outstanding academic, but he followed his words with deeds.

Maria Florencia Gor

Despite the challenging and frightening nature of our times, Joe always struck a balance between optimism and realism. He stands as an inspiration for us to continue to fight for our cause with a renewed strength, carrying on his commitment to make a more just world.

Chris Hamer

Joe was an outspoken and enormously courageous spokesman and flag bearer for our whole movement worldwide. The Workable World Trust which he set up in recent years continues his legacy, and provides crucial support for a number of our causes.

World Government Research Network [tweet]:

[Joe was] a highly systematic thinker on world order/government who offered some of the most sophisticated treatments of how democracy on a global scale might actually be operationalized. His 2013 book Transforming the United Nations System is a very instructive read.