



Patrick O'Meara

January 7, 1938 - March 30, 2021

Patrick O'Meara, professor and vice president emeritus of Indiana University, scholar, administrator, mentor, beloved uncle, and dear friend, born January 7, 1938, Cape Town, South Africa, died peacefully in his home on March 30 after a brief illness. On his last day, his family remained by his side so he would not be alone as his spirit left this world.

Patrick is survived by his nephew Tim O'Meara and his wife Bridget (Hoban) who were ever-present throughout his final days, nieces Maria, Jeannie, Katie, Eileen, and Suzanne O'Meara, sister-in-law Lorraine (Rademeyer), and 8 great-nephews and nieces and their children.

Patrick was pre-deceased by his brothers Timothy and Daniel, sister-in-law Jean (Fadden) and parents Fiorina (Allorto) and Daniel.

Patrick is also survived by many dear and well-loved friends whose lives he touched with his kindness, generosity, and playful spirit. Leaving a Bloomington restaurant or IU musical performance with Patrick was a lengthy affair, as he seemed to know everyone and always stopped to catch up on their lives and make the proper introductions.

Born in Cape Town, South Africa to an Irish father and Italian mother who ran a bakery, Patrick came to IU in the 1960s and earned his master's and doctoral degrees in political science. In 1972, he became director of the African Studies Program, a role he served for more than two decades. Today, the center is part of the School of Global and International Studies. Patrick later became IU's first vice president for international affairs.

Over five decades, Patrick played an instrumental role in IU's international expansion. Recognizing the critical importance of global relationships, Patrick traveled the world forming connections with governments and academic institutions, and meeting with heads of state and dignitaries, including Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama. He also led the university's involvement in the establishment of South Africa's Khanya College, and other initiatives addressing the educational and economic challenges the country faced after apartheid.

Patrick made a lasting impact as a world scholar. In 1977, he published the textbook *Africa*, which became one of the most popular introductory texts for African studies. Now in its fourth edition, *Africa* is still widely used. He authored numerous books and articles throughout his career. In a 1987 essay about the collapse of South Africa's National Party, Patrick wrote that there was "no longer a pretense of an underlying rationale for its actions other than the maintenance of white power."

With his quick wit and astute observations, Patrick was a delight to be around. He once observed that the hotel carpeting was "too ugly to ignore" or, when asked if his Easter necktie was new, replied "no, I've just resurrected it for the occasion."

Patrick was incredibly close to his family, spending holidays and vacations with his nieces and nephews in South Bend and Cape Town. Unc would drive up to South Bend a few days before Christmas and take us zipping around town, picking up Polish pastries from the Farmer's Market, Italian cookies from Macri's, lasagne from Bamber's, and necessary odds and ends to decorate the house. He played carols on the piano, set out little bowls of nuts and cheese plates and—wearing a bright red vest and Christmas tie—was always the first ready for Mass. He also remained close to his family in Cape Town, visiting them throughout the years and conversing with his niece Suzanne regularly over the past year.

Unc loved games, puzzles, and little surprises. A July 4th photo captures him buying a jumbo pack of fireworks at Crazy Steve's, a twinkle in his eye. He

knew every piece of the puzzle collection in the Lilly library and most of the people who worked there. In his airy home in the woods, he displayed his own wonderful collection of pop-up books, puzzles, and toys—not to mention the coffee table painted with trompe l'oeil teacups and a checkered cloth. Even his silk ties, upon close examination, revealed charming patterns of honeybees and flowers, camels and polar bears, dolphins, owls, flamingoes, and swirling intricate paisleys.

Above all, we remember Patrick for his kindness. He was attuned to others' pain and sadness, and quick to offer comfort, understanding, and to advocate on their behalf.

Throughout his life, Patrick shared his curiosity and abundant joy in all he found in the world, most recently through a virtual launch of *Windows on Worlds*, a book he coauthored with Leah Peck, that celebrates signature pieces from the university's international collections. Up until two weeks before his death, Patrick was busy chatting with his friends and family and writing another book about the history of the university he loved.

Family and friends are deeply blessed to have had Patrick in our lives for as long as we did. He will be deeply missed, and fondly remembered.

Patrick will be laid to rest near his brother and sister-in-law at Cedar Grove Cemetery at the University of Notre Dame. Services will be private.

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory, 4155 S. Old State Road 37, Bloomington have been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at www.allencares.com

If you wish to make a gift in Patrick's memory, you may donate to the Patrick O'Meara Scholarship through the IU Foundation. Select IU Foundation from the dropdown menu. Type Patrick O'Meara Scholarship in the field below.

Patrick's career is covered in this tribute by Indiana University.

Tribute Wall



“ I learned only today--20 June 2023--of my cherished friend's passing. Patrick played a huge and joyous role in my life as a student at the University of Cape Town. It was a time of tumultuous academic and romantic upheavals. I was writing a master's dissertation on Benjamin Disraeli and was somewhat in awe of my first and much respected supervisor (unfortunately, he was replaced). Patrick encouraged me to interact more actively with Faculty, support and guidance for which I was so grateful. He also played a significant role in advising me on my rollercoaster friendship with his best friend, Tony Hoberman, so he walked a diplomatic and sincere path arbitrating and counselling in his wise and often humorous way. I loved and adored Patrick. We had a wonderful rapport and time spent together was truly a delight. I knew that so many of his close relatives had passed and that this mortality overshadowed his early years, but admired his determination to enjoy life and to share his happiness so generously with others. . I knew he was at Indiana University and we connected now and again via email in subsequent years. What a luminous soul he possessed, its light shone brightly and truly illuminated my path in those years when we were mere apprentices to life. May he be rewarded for all his many good deeds. With much love and infinite gratitude, Anne Sarzin (Sydney, Australia).

Anne Sarzin - June 19, 2023 at 11:06 PM

GR

“ First as Dean and then as the first Vice President of International Programs Patrick O’Meara has been an indefatigable supporter of the smaller campuses. During my tenure as Director of International Programs at IU South Bend Patrick was my mentor. No matter how engaged he was as one the foremost promoters of IU’s international stature, he always found time to help me grow International Programs on our campus. Patrick understood the different but no less vital role of international degrees, study abroad, international students, and events for campuses where students and faculty do not have the same opportunities as on the main campus.

My years on the John Ryan Award committee further demonstrated Patrick’s unflagging support for everyone in the IU system. Thus in 2019 he managed to get permission for a third Ryan award so that Linda Wallace from IU Kokomo could be recognized for creating exchanges with Yeongju, South Korea that helped change the curriculum in both institutions.

Whatever he undertook, Patrick created not merely institutional connections but lasting friendships. A supportive and compassionate leader, he made sure that everyone in his organization had the opportunity to thrive and advance. He is the model for many of us who benefitted from his generosity, his spirit, and his creativity.

Gabrielle Robinson, Professor Emerita of English
<https://www.gabriellerobinson.com/>

Gabrielle Robinson - May 28, 2021 at 07:19 PM

MM

“ We had several phone calls with Patrick every year ever since we moved to California more than 20 years ago. The last phone conversation we had with Patrick was shortly after his birthday this year when he described the joys he had with friends and family and about the work on his latest book. He was his usual cheerful and witty self, indicating he was in good health and spirit. The news of his passing therefore was such a shock and blow to us. We had known Patrick for over 40 years. He was a loyal friend like no others. What made Patrick special too was his combination of worldliness with deep religious faith. Every conversation with him left a smile on our faces. Every gift from him was thoughtful, yet totally unexpected. His passing left a profound void in our hearts.

Maria and Phil

Maria C Morgan - May 02, 2021 at 04:02 AM

MM

“ A most dedicated teacher, scholar and administrator for our university.

Matt Morris - April 07, 2021 at 08:34 AM

SO

“ miss all the phone calls from Uncle Patrick . am lost & alone in cape town . he was my 1 friend & guide since the day i was born. & he knew & cared for all my animal friends . he intervened & rescued me throughout my life. could feel his presence in our house in cape town.

suzanne o'meara - April 06, 2021 at 04:30 PM