Donald Cullen, Professor Emeritus at the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, was 89 when he died last year. Don’s undergraduate work at Hobart College was interrupted by service as a torpedo officer aboard a destroyer in the Pacific during World War II. After graduating from Hobart in 1947, he spent a year in graduate study in sociology at the University of Chicago before transferring to the School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR School) where he earned an M.S. in 1949 and a Ph.D. in 1953. During that time, Don was an Instructor in the School of Business at St. Bonaventure University. Don became an Assistant Professor at ILR in 1953, an Associate Professor in 1958, and a Full Professor in 1966. He became Professor Emeritus upon his retirement in 1990 after what ILR School Dean David Lipsky described as “many years of distinguished and dedicated service to the ILR School.”

Don’s textbook, The Labor Sector, was used in classrooms across the country and he was a nationally respected expert on collective bargaining in the construction industry. Among his scholarly articles, “The Interindustry Wage Structure,” which appeared in the prestigious American Economic Review, was described by an ILR
Faculty Review Committee in 1966 as “one of the most significant contributions to labor economics in the post-war period and one of the most frequently cited articles in the field.” Don’s publications concerning the Taft-Hartley Act and national emergency disputes and his monograph on National Emergency Strikes remain the standard works on the subject.

In addition to his research, Don shouldered more than his share of required course teaching. Although he taught a wide range of courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels, Don was a preeminent teacher of collective bargaining, considered then the capstone course in the ILR curriculum. His teaching was distinguished by his thorough preparation and organization of content, high academic standards, and a lively and humorous style that engaged and challenged his students.

Two members of this committee were undergraduate students in Don’s collective bargaining course. One remembers writing a 90-page paper on collective bargaining in the steel industry for his course. He also remembers that Don was “very fussy” about student papers and graded them meticulously on style as well as content. The other recalled keeping his notes from that class for many years until he became depressed reading Don’s critical comments on his answers to exam questions.

Don also taught extensively for union and management groups in the ILR School’s Extension Division. He was regarded as one of the best and most effective Extension program teachers.

The outstanding quality of Don’s research and teaching was matched by his many other accomplishments, all of which contributed positively to the reputation of the ILR School. He served for many years as a mediator, factfinder, and arbitrator in the public and private sectors. He was a member of the labor arbitration panels of the American Arbitration Association, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, the New York State Public Employment Relations Board, and the New York State Mediation Board. (Don’s mediation skills, a colleague remembered, enabled him to raise a sensitive topic in an inoffensive way.) Don was also a
Senior Staff Economist for the President’s Council of Economic Advisers. In addition, for a period of over 36 years, Don served as Assistant Editor, Associate Editor, and Editor of the *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*.

One colleague who was Associate Editor during Don’s Editorship considers him “the best editor of a social science journal of all time:”

> He [Don] frequently wrote 10 or 15 page letters to authors that included a line-by-line critique of their work, and he devoted endless hours to working with authors to improve the logic and clarity of their papers…He was always a gentleman and dealt with people in a polite and considerate fashion. But I am sure I am not the only one who felt at least a little bit annoyed when Don very politely pointed out the flaws in my thinking. The lessons Don taught me about logic, clear thinking and writing have served me well over my entire career.

Another member of this committee referred to Don as an extraordinary editor who essentially rewrote every paper that was published while he was Editor of the *ILRR*. Don’s treatment of this committee member’s own manuscripts had him “grinding [his] teeth wondering how he could dare to change” what he had written. He concluded, however, that his manuscripts were much better as the result of Don’s editorial work. Fittingly, Don would often cite the following lines from H.G. Wells:

> No passion in the world,  
> No love or hate,  
> Is equal to the passion  
> To alter someone else’s draft.

Don’s dedication of so much time and energy to being Editor of the *ILRR* is responsible, in many ways, for the *Review’s* being recognized today as the leading journal in industrial relations. Another committee member, who was also Associate Editor during Don’s tenure, points out, as a measure of Don’s time commitment,
that Don had one Associate Editor and a Managing Editor whereas today there are two Editors, five Associate Editors, and a Book Review Editor.

Don loved the theater. His retirement gift from ILR included season tickets for him and his beloved wife Jacqueline to a theater in Rochester. He must have sensed the humor and the admiration of his colleagues when he was told that he had to use some form of identification at the theater because ILR had purchased the tickets at the senior citizen rate.

As a young professor at Cornell, Don was a member of a Trumansburg car pool that included four other distinguished ILR professors: Bob Ferguson, John McConnel, Duncan MacIntyre, and Bill Whyte. During these daily rides, Don and his colleagues developed a spirit of camaraderie that carried over not only to work but to the squash and tennis courts and to what Don referred to as ILR’s Old Men’s League in various sports, including softball. Don recalled getting due respect on the squash court after accidentally inflicting a three-stitch cut above MacIntyre’s eye. His car pool colleagues were quick to point out that, although Don’s brother Bob was a member of the football coaching staff at Cornell, the connection did not get Don or them free tickets. The experiences of the long-ago car pool is a reminder of the many dimensions of memories and of life and, in Don’s case, of the enormous and positive influence he had not only on the School of Industrial and Labor Relations but also on the lives of so many of his colleagues at Cornell.

*James Gross, Chair; John Burton; Ronald Ehrenberg; David Lipsky*