

I am writing to report that Florida and FAU has lost a superstar. Dr. John M. DeGrove passed away on Friday, April 13, 2012. He was 87 years old.

Dr. DeGrove came to FAU from the University of Florida in 1964 -- the year he university opened -- as a professor and chair of the Department of Political Science. He later served as Provost of FAU's Broward campuses.

In 1972, when the Legislature established the Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems -- a regional applied research and public policy center that brought together scholars from FAU and FIU -- Dr. DeGrove was chosen as its first Director. Under his leadership, the Joint Center's applied research focused on four areas associated with growth management: urban planning and community development; natural resources planning and conservation; state and regional policy analysis; and local governance and service delivery.

During a span of nearly four decades, Dr. DeGrove worked closely with Florida Governors Reubin Askew, Bob Graham, Bob Martinez and Lawton Chiles to develop growth management legislation so comprehensive that it served as a model for many other states.

In 1983, Dr. DeGrove took a two-year leave of absence from FAU to accept appointment as Secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs. During his term, he was instrumental in the conception and passage of the 1985 Growth Management Act and the State Comprehensive Plan, which placed a mandate on every local government in Florida to compile a detailed plan for controlling growth and protecting the environment.

In 1999, after 27-years as Director of the Joint Center, Dr. DeGrove retired, and became the first holder of the Eminent Scholar Chair that bears his name. In retirement, he not only served on the Board of the 1000 Friends of Florida, but he also authored PLANNING POLICY AND POLITICS, a critical analysis of smart growth efforts in six states, published in 2005 by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

As urban planning historians examine the superstars of the second half of the 20th Century, Dr. John M. DeGrove will be at the head of the galaxy.

In honor of Dr. Degrove, the School of Urban and Regional Planning will be devoting the opening portion of the final session of its 2011-2012 "Rethinking Planning in Florida" lecture series, its May 15th, 2012 Conference, to a reflection on his work and accomplishments. To view the full program for the Conference and to register, please see: southfloridaindex.fau.edu