

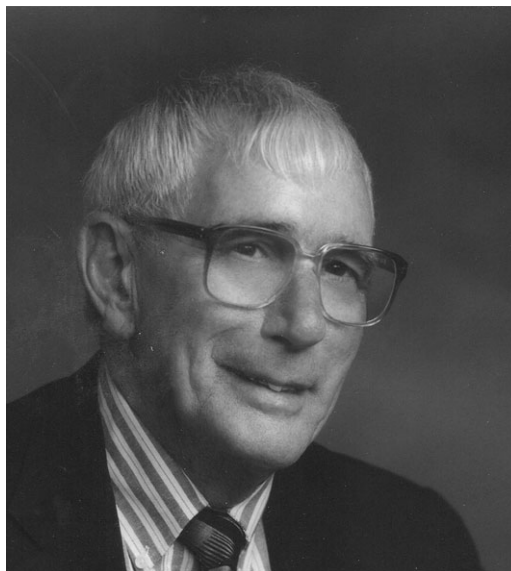
F. THOMAS JUSTER (1926–2010): IN MEMORIAM

Economist F. Thomas Juster, a former director of the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (ISR), and the founding director of the landmark U-M Health & Retirement Study, died in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on July 21. He was 83.

“Tom Juster was much more than an eminent research scientist who made important contributions to the fields of economics and survey research,” says ISR Director James S. Jackson. “He was also an honest man who believed deeply in the value of survey research, and who had a gift for conducting research that was not only relevant to public policy but also illuminated the realities of everyday life. He fought hard for what he believed in, and brought honor to his profession, his colleagues, his friends, and his family. He will be greatly missed.”

Over his long and distinguished career, Juster made major contributions to the assessment of household savings and wealth, and to the measurement of time use in American families.

“Tom Juster was the founding director of perhaps the most important social science study of the last twenty-five years—the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), which will continue as a living tribute to him,” says Richard Suzman, Director, Division of Social and Behavioral Research, National Institute on Aging. “Innovative and internationally recognized, the HRS is the premier study on retirement, pensions, and the interrelationships between health and economic



status in the older population. Many of the study's innovations came from Tom's mind. These include breaking the length barrier for surveys and improving the measurement of wealth."

"When Tom began his work, it was widely accepted that you couldn't really measure wealth accurately with surveys," says U-M economist Robert Willis, who succeeded Juster as director of the HRS. "When you ask how much people have in their savings or IRA accounts, or what their homes are worth, too many people say they don't know or refuse to answer. But instead of accepting these answers, Tom went on to ask people, 'Well, do you have more or less than \$1000?' and if they said more, then they would be asked, 'Do you have more or less than \$5000?' and so on. This provided an answer within a relatively narrow range, and it's an approach that is widely used now around the world in all kinds of surveys."

His contribution to the measurement of time use in U.S. households resulted in the still widely cited 1985 book co-edited with U-M economist Frank Stafford, *Time, Goods, and Well-Being*. The survey the book was based on was the first national work to use scientifically valid methods to collect time use data using time diaries. The NSF theme was to develop time diary data to create accounts of non-market activity (and social indicators) and to use time diaries for a range of behavior studies in the realm of intra-family allocation and bargaining. The project had a field period of 1975–76 in quarterly waves across the four seasons and randomly assigned both a respondent and spouse—a weekday and a weekend day for the spousal pairs. The design is a great blend of social science and cost-effective data collection. Spousal pairs and data for each for two days creates four diaries per couple. The design supports the study of intra-family time allocation and provides many diaries given the size of the couples sample.

Juster, who was born in Hollis, Long Island, New York on August 17, 1926, received a B.S. degree in Education from Rutgers University in 1949. He went on to earn a Ph.D. in Economics from Columbia University in 1956. He served as an assistant professor at Amherst College from 1953 to 1959, and served on the research staff of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) from 1959 to 1973. In that year, he joined the faculty of the University of Michigan as a research scientist and professor of economics, and served as director of the Institute for Social Research from 1976 to 1986.

During his tenure as ISR director, he led a successful effort to safeguard social science funding levels threatened at the start of the Reagan Administration. Along with other leading social scientists, he testified at congressional hearings and prepared numerous position papers on the value of continuous, large-scale, long-term social science surveys and their relevance to public policy.

The author of numerous books and peer-reviewed articles on consumer expectations, the distribution of economic well-being, and time use, Juster became increasingly interested in the economics of aging. He served as the founding director of the interdisciplinary Health and Retirement Survey, which became the model for a growing number of similar studies around the world. Commissioned and funded by the National Institute on Aging, the study of more than 22,000 participants over age 50 sheds light on issues such as precursors and consequences of retirement, life course patterns of wealth accumulation and consumption, incidence of work disability, and the relationship of health, income, and wealth over time.

“Tom accomplished the rare feat of getting scholars from different disciplines with different ideas to work effectively with each other because he was able to listen, was widely respected and everyone liked him,” says the NIA’s Suzman. “His sense of people and how to run a survey helped manage the melding of ideas from disparate and often warring disciplines, such as economics, epidemiology, demography and psychology, well before interdisciplinarity became the rage.”

Juster also served on the editorial boards of several journals and served as editor of *Economic Outlook USA*. He was a fellow of the American Statistical Association and the National Association of Business Economists, and chaired many national committees and professional associations. In 1993, he received the U-M’s Senior Research Scientist Lectureship Award in recognition of his “distinguished contributions to the intellectual environment of the University of Michigan and excellence in research.”

He is survived by his wife Marie of Ann Arbor; children Thomas (Sarah Kruse) Juster of St. Petersburg, Florida, Susan Juster of Ann Arbor, Arnold (Netta Berlin) Juster of Ann Arbor, and Maria (Eric Anderson) Juster of Wellfleet, Massachusetts; and grandchildren Rachel Garrison, Jane Juster Mayfield, Matthew Juster Mayfield, Mario Juster Kruse, Sofia Juster Kruse, and Charlie Juster Anderson. He is also survived by sisters June Juster Kulp and Rosalie Juster.

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