

Glenn H. Beyer

August 11, 1913 — November 4, 1969

Professor Glenn H. Beyer joined Cornell University in 1947 as one of the first professors in the field of housing in the United States. Although Professor Beyer had been ill for a number of years, often working under conditions of severe personal discomfort, he provided great strength to the department program, contributed in important ways to the college and the University, and achieved a position of national leadership and international stature in the field of housing.

Professor Beyer was born in Chester, South Dakota. He received his A.B. degree from Augustana College, South Dakota, in 1935. He completed work for his Master's degree at George Washington University in 1937, with a major in economics and with minors in political science and geography. Between the years of 1937 and 1947, he served the United States government in a variety of important posts, including that of housing market analyst for the Division of Housing Coordination, becoming director of the Market Research Section of the National Housing Agency. He then went on to serve as economic and housing analyst for the Federal Housing Administration. In addition, he served as an economist in the United States Office of Housing Expediter. During this period he also lectured at the American University in Washington, D.C.

He joined the staff of the Department of Housing and Design in 1947, where he was instrumental in establishing a strong research and graduate teaching focus in the area of the socioeconomic aspect of housing.

Professor Beyer's background, scholarship, and inquiring mind provided the impetus for important research studies within the Department which have expanded the horizons of the field as well as providing basic information about the relationship of individuals, families, their housing needs, and the social and economic factors which are instrumental in satisfying these needs. He also played a key role in the creation of the Housing Research Center and was its first director. This later became Cornell's Center for Housing and Environmental Studies. He was director of the Center from its establishment in 1950 until his death. He was elected to the College of Architecture faculty at the time the Center was established. His research involvement included social science applications to housing design, marketing and distribution, consumer preferences, needs of special groups such as the aged, farm housing and problems of the rapidly growing urban-rural fringe area as well as other social and economic factors in housing.

Professor Glenn Beyer was also a prolific and excellent writer, with six major publications to his credit, including *The Urban Explosion in Latin America*, which summarized a major international meeting which brought to the Cornell campus top figures in Latin American housing and urban affairs as well as prominent scholars in these fields in the United States. His book, *Housing the Aged in Western Countries*, coauthored with F. H. J. Nierstrasz and published in Holland, called attention to the special problems revolving around an important and growing segment of many populations. His book, *Housing and Society*, has become the basic textbook for many housing courses offered in colleges and universities throughout the United States. This 600-page book covers all aspects of the role of housing in society. *Housing: A Factual Analysis* provided pertinent, basic, and valuable data useful to all those in any way connected with the problems of policy needs.

Other books dealt with the specific problem of rural housing. *Farm Housing* was prepared for the Social Science Council in cooperation with the United States Bureau of the Census. This followed a publication entitled *Farm Housing in the Northeast*. In addition to these major publications, Professor Beyer was also the author of numerous monographs, bulletins and articles dealing with housing economics, home financing, and the problems of interdisciplinary research. He was active professionally as a member of the National Committee of the National Academy of Science, from which he received a special citation for service.

Professor Beyer's major professional activities engaged him not only in national concerns relative to housing but involved him in many international aspects of housing. In 1968 he was nominated by the United States government to represent the United States as a leading authority in the United Nations Stockholm Conference of Senior Officials of National Bodies concerned with Urban and regional research.

Glenn Beyer contributed in important ways to problems of international aspects of housing, the first two assignments involving Venezuela and Mexico. He carried on under the auspices of the U. S. State Department at a time when our relations with these countries were somewhat strained, and his efforts contributed greatly to reducing these tensions. Similarly, he contributed in important ways to equally difficult problems involving Puerto Rico and Yugoslavia.

From November 1964 to January 1965 he served as a member of the Ford Foundation mission to India to advise on national housing policy. He was equally active on the national scene, where most recently he was selected as a member of the special three-week summer study group convened at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, by the Department of Housing, the Office of Science and Technology, and the executive offices of the president of the United States. He participated in national conferences and important educational institutions throughout the

country. He served as consultant to industries and government agencies, and was called as expert witness for various congressional committees on housing and related federal legislation.

Among his many honors and awards was his receipt of a one-year award from the Ford Foundation to study housing for the elderly in twelve Western European countries. He also received the Centennial Award for Distinguished Services to Profession and Education from Augustana College and a special citation awarded by the National Academy of Sciences Building Research Advisory Board for his services to the field of housing. He was listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the East*, *American Men of Science*, *Who Knows and What*, *Contemporary Authors*, and *The American Honorarium*. Although the facts and figures concerning Professor Beyer's professional life are relatively easily acquired and listed, the more subtle and perhaps more important contributions which Professor Beyer made in respect to improving man's environment are easily missed. His personal commitment to the field, his relentless concern for quality, his persistent pursuit of new knowledge brought to his department a position of leadership in this field and drew to the college brilliant, able, and equally dedicated young people who were guided, taught and inspired by Professor Beyer's professional concern and scholarly standards. Perhaps more than anything else these young people and their contributions to the study of human habitation will remain as the greatest tribute to this man's life pursuit.

Earl Morris, Ruby Loper, Joseph Carreiro