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Ray Bromley

Recipient of the Carl O. Sauer Distinguished Scholarship Award for 2001

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As far as I was concerned, Ray Bromley was a “living legend” the first time I met him in an up-scale hotel room in Lima’s beachside suburb of Miraflores in 1981. By that time Ray had already amassed a formidable reputation and an extensive publication record in geography and planning, publishing on the informal sector marketing, regional planning, and Latin American studies. His friendliness, energy, and drive impressed me,

as did his precise command of Spanish and the ease with which he spoke without a trace of a non-native accent. In the nearly 20 years that followed, nearly three years of which we worked together in Peru as municipal and regional planning advisors for the United States Agency for International Development, my personal and professional respect for Ray Bromley has deepened and grown.

It is most fitting, and an honor well deserved, that the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers has awarded the Carl O. Sauer Distinguished Scholarship Award, 2001, to Ray Bromley, professor of geography and planning at the State University of New York at Albany.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, just as he was finishing his doctoral dissertation, Ray Bromley authored or co-authored (with

Rich Symanski, Charles Good, and Ian Manners – in various permutations) a series of seminal papers in the principal geographic and Latin American Studies journals on periodic and informal sector marketing. These papers, published in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (2), *Professional Geographer*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *Ekistics*, *Latin American Research Review*, and the *Journal of Latin American Studies* in just a two year period 1974-1975, examined the theme from theoretical, geographic, historical, and regional development perspectives and set the stage for several decades of subsequent research by Bromley and many other scholars.

Over the next decade Ray Bromley authored, co-authored, edited, and co-edited six scholarly books. Three of these examined informal sector enterprises in the Third World – *The Urban Informal Sector: Critical Perspectives n Employment and Housing Policies* ed. (1979), *Casual Work and Poverty in Third World Cities* co-ed. with Chris Gerry (1979), and *Planning for Small Enterprises in Third World Cities* ed. (1985). Other scholarly volumes have focused on regional and development planning, including *Development and Planning in Ecuador* (1977), *Política X Técnica no Planejamento* co-ed. with Eduardo Bustelo (1982), and *South American Development: A Geographical Introduction* co-author with RDF Bromley (1982, 2nd ed. 1988). In addition to producing his own work, between 1982 and 1993 Bromley co-edited (with Gavin Kitching) a book series on Development and Underdevelopment for Routledge Publishers. Several of the books published in this series have had broad impact on academic debates (Cristobal Kay, *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment*,

1989) and the practice of development planning (Dennis Rondinelli, *Development Projects as Policy Experiments: An Adaptive Approach to Development Administration*, 1983).

Few English-speaking academics publish their work in any language other than English. However, Ray Bromley has made a habit of publishing and reprinting his work not only in English, but also in Spanish, Portuguese, and even Indonesian insuring a broad and more culturally sensitive dissemination of his research. Fourteen of Ray's articles have been reprinted, and four of these have been reprinted twice!

Ray Bromley has always had a knack for fieldwork, an outgoing personality, and the ability to work and thrive in challenging and demanding conditions that would deter many academic geographers. He has spent long periods in the field in Ecuador and Peru, and he worked off and on again for years in Colombia, especially in Cali, studying street vending and informal marketing in some of the city's roughest and most dangerous neighborhoods. He was never assaulted or robbed, and at one point told me that he had never felt worried or concerned. Ray also has been a mentor to many geographers, planners, and others in Latin America, Great Britain, and in the United States. Professor Vicky Lawson (University of Washington), has effectively summarized Ray's role as a mentor. She writes "... that Ray has provided invaluable mentorship to a generation of scholars who followed his work ... He opened the door for many of us who followed in his footsteps, doing critical and engaged research on urban development and informal work in Latin America ... He has been generous with his time, his insights and his willingness to contribute his presentations and his writing to our conferences and journal issues. Ray has been an inspiration ..."

Like Professor Lawson, I consider myself lucky to have benefited from his mentoring, as well as his friendship and intellectual stimulation. Ray's professional career has been divided between three continents – Europe, South America, and North America. He graduated with a BA (Honours) in geography from Cambridge University in 1969 and completed his Ph.D. in geography from Cambridge in 1975. He held academic appointments at the University of Wales, Swansea, beginning as a tutor in 1971 and rising to senior lecturer in 1984. For four years, between 1981 and 1984, he was on academic leave from the University of Wales while he worked as a regional planning advisor in Peru for the United States Agency for International Development under the auspices of Syracuse University and Peruvian Prime Minister's Office. In 1984 he accepted an appointment to the faculty of the State University of New York, Albany as an associate professor of geography and planning and Latin American and Caribbean Studies. He was subsequently promoted to full professor and has held a wide range of responsibilities including department chair (twice) and director of the university's Lewis Mumford Center for Urban and Regional Research.

As a scholar, Ray Bromley is an active community member, and this has been especially so since he came to Albany where he has lent his time and talents to a long list of task forces, committees, and community service efforts that benefit from his knowledge of urban and regional planning theory and practice. He has also worked as a consultant, locally and abroad, for large as well as small organizations – the United Nations, UNICEF, the United States Agency for International Development, the New York City Department of Mental Health, and the University at Albany Foundation, and Rensselaer County Historical Society.

His most recent activity has been organizing conferences and research on Albany's 20th century physical development, as part of the "Albany Heritage" Celebrations, marking the 350th anniversary of the establishment of Beverwyck, the Dutch trading community that later became the City of Albany. Ray's most recent writings have been on the history of ideas in planning and development, including papers on Hernando de Soto, John Turner, Constantinos Doxiadis, and Gottfried Feder.