

Joseph James Seneca, Distinguished University Professor of Economics Emeritus and Vice President of Academic Affairs Emeritus at Rutgers University, passed away November 27 after a long battle with cancer. In his decades-long career at Rutgers, Dr. Seneca touched the lives of thousands of students and influenced New Jersey economic policy, receiving numerous awards for exemplary teaching and public service. Many years after taking his legendary undergraduate economics courses at Rutgers College, former students would often provide testimony on the extraordinary impact his lectures and classroom instruction made on their lives and professional careers.

His research on the New Jersey economy spanned five decades. He served on and chaired for many years the New Jersey Council of Economic Advisors, providing valuable counsel to governors of both parties. He provided extensive budgetary testimony in Trenton and numerous policy briefings in Washington. Specializing in Environmental Economics and Policy, State and Local Economic Development, and Government Regulation of Business. Seneca was a frequent speaker to business, professional, and governmental groups. For more than 30 years, he authored with his colleague James W. Hughes the Rutgers Regional Report, which provides regular analyses of current New Jersey economic issues. The latest iteration of the report provides in-depth analysis of the pandemic's impact on the state and national economy. Although seriously ill, he worked diligently on all aspects of this project. His lifetime works advanced both New Jersey and Rutgers, a unique dual career achievement.

Dr. Seneca served as Rutgers University Vice President for Academic Affairs from 1991 to 2003. In that role he was chief academic officer for the entire university; in addition, he also had direct responsibility for the New Brunswick campus. Seneca helped to guide the university with calm, strength, and fortitude through a difficult period for the university despite severe cuts in state funding. A familiar and beloved figure on the campus, Seneca always had time to talk to faculty, staff, and students despite the demands of his job. He was the model administrator who gained the enormous respect and admiration of the faculty. A gifted speaker as well as teacher, his annual talks to university administrators were always filled-to capacity. Talking of Joe, members of the Rutgers community most frequently describe him as a truly good man and a valued colleague who mentored countless students, faculty, and administrators.

Born in Philadelphia, Dr. Seneca received his undergraduate degree in economics, Phi Beta Kappa, from the University of Pennsylvania, followed by a PhD in economics from Penn. There he met Rosalind, a British fellow student who became his wife of 50 years. Joe came to Rutgers New Brunswick in 1967 right out of graduate school, eventually serving as chair of the economics department and then moving to his university vice presidency. He finished his career at Rutgers as a University Professor, one of the highest professorial ranks at the university. He published over 150 articles, reports, and books. Two of his most recent books were published by the Rutgers University Press: *America's Demographic Tapestry*, and *New Jersey's Postsuburban Economy*.

An avid bird watcher, Joe traveled worldwide to pursue his passion. In fact, Joe's expertise in economics was almost matched by his expertise in birds. Joe could instantly identify almost any bird in North America by sight or song. An equally passionate fan of the Philadelphia Phillies, Joe could often be found at pick-up softball games in Madison, New Jersey, where he

lived for many years. In his prime, Joe was a multi-sport athlete, and he played baseball or softball his entire life. Although deeply modest, Joe's one boast was that he had hit safely in seven consecutive decades, from the 1950s to the 2010s.

After Joe's retirement, the Senecas moved to North Carolina to be near their son Matthew, whose accomplishments brought joy to Joe's life. He spent many pleasurable summers sailing with his family at Westport Point, Mass., and was deeply devoted to his wife and son, who survive him along with his sister Elaine.

Those wishing to contribute in Joe's memory may donate to the National Audubon Society, [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).