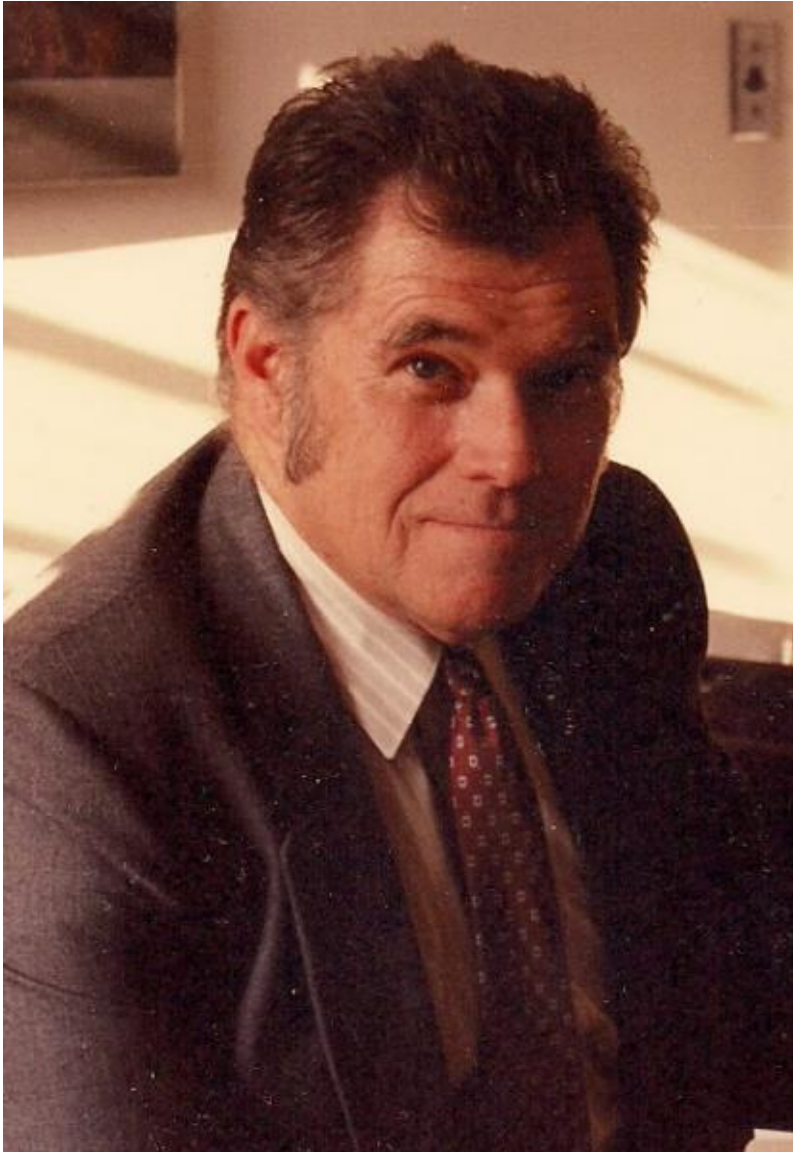


Professor Carey McWilliams Brought Political Philosophy to Life for Students; Honored with Livingston Legacy Award



Wilson Carey McWilliams (1933–2005), known as Carey, was posthumously honored in 2015 with the Livingston Legacy Award for his role as a distinguished political scientist throughout most of Livingston College's history.



McWilliams was a political scientist at Livingston College and Rutgers University for 35 years.

McWilliams was born in Santa Monica, California. He graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1955, then served in the 11th Airborne Division of the United States Army from 1955–1961. He earned his master's and Ph.D. degrees at the same university. He was also active in the early stages of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement and the student activist group SLATE.

Prior to teaching at Rutgers he taught at Oberlin College and Brooklyn College. He was also a visiting professor at Yale University, Harvard University and Haverford College. He came to Yale in spring 1969 with a timely and provocative seminar on "American Radical Thought."

McWilliams was the recipient of the John Witherspoon Award for Distinguished Service to the Humanities, conferred by the New Jersey Committee for the Humanities, and also served as a Vice-President of the American Political Science Association.

McWilliams was the author of several books, including *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (1973, University of California Press), for which he won the National Historical Society prize in 1974. In this book, McWilliams argued that there was an "alternative tradition" to the dominant liberal tradition in America, which he variously traced through the thought of the Puritans, the Anti-Federalists, and various major and minor literary figures such as Hawthorne, Melville, Twain and Ellison. He argued that this tradition drew philosophical inspiration from ancient Greek and Christian sources manifested in an emphasis upon community and fraternity, which was properly the means to achieving a form of civic liberty. McWilliams was also a prolific essayist.

McWilliams died on March 29, 2005, at age 71. He had been married for 38 years to the psychoanalyst and author Nancy Riley McWilliams. Carey and Nancy have two daughters, the musician Helen McWilliams, and Susan McWilliams, an associate professor of politics.

McWilliams "really cared about individual students," his spouse Nancy Riley McWilliams tells us in the embedded video. **"He made the ideas of long-dead thinkers be alive and relevant to students"**>(You may also open the video in a new window.)

At the 2015 Livingston Legacy Award presentation, Patrick Deneen, a student of McWilliams at the undergraduate and graduate levels, remembered him as a friend and "about the best teacher and finest human this institution ever had the fortune to call its own."

After her father's death, Susan McWilliams spoke to Rutgers students about her father's love for Rutgers and his great interest in his students' lives.

Leonard M. Klepner, a Livingston College 1972 graduate, also wrote about McWilliams' friendship and mentorship.

The Livingston College Distinguished Alumni and Livingston Legacy Awards are held approximately every two years by the Livingston Alumni Association of Rutgers University. The 2015 celebration was held Tuesday, November 10 at the Rutgers Club in New Brunswick, New Jersey.