

MEMORANDUM

From: Mark B. Rosenberg, *President*
Kenneth G. Furton, *Provost and Executive Vice President*
To: University Community
Date: January 14, 2019
Subject: *Passing of Emeritus Associate Professor of History Brian Peterson*

It is with profound sadness that we have learned of the untimely passing of our colleague and friend Brian Peterson, Emeritus Associate Professor of History, on Saturday, January 12. He is survived by his wife, Joyce Shaw Peterson, Emerita Associate Professor of History, their sons, Lars and Erik, their grandchildren Silvana, Ingrid, and Leora, as well as many family and friends.

Dr. Peterson was one of our Founding Faculty who dedicated 43 years of his professional life to FIU. He joined the Department of History at Florida International University in January 1973, shortly after FIU opened doors in Fall 1972, as an Assistant Professor, after having been a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California in 1972. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1978 and appointed Emeritus upon retiring in 2016. Dr. Peterson earned his B.A. from Drake University in 1964, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Modern European History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1965 and 1976, respectively.

Dr. Peterson was the first secretary-treasurer of the United Faculty of Florida at FIU from 1973 to 1975 and president of the union chapter in 1981. He was the main undergraduate advisor for the History Department, led many students in non-credit certificate courses in the Gordon Institute's Student Honors Mentor Program, taught first-year courses in the Honors College for many years, and was a long-time representative in the Faculty Senate. In addition, he served our community beyond the walls of FIU, by writing educational policy studies for the School Board of Miami-Dade County, strengthening academic performance in Miami's poorest neighborhoods, by providing research to advance the move for several Florida universities – including FIU – from a Florida two-year upper-division university to a four-year institution, or by serving on the Miami-Dade County Social and Economic Development Council. Even after retirement, Dr. Peterson stayed engaged with FIU; Douglas Wartzok, President of the FIU Emeritus Circle, recalls: *"To no one's surprise, Brian kept an active involvement with FIU as an Emeritus Professor. He attended Emeritus Circle functions as well as Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees meetings. He always pushed FIU to be better in all aspects."*

All who knew and loved him will dearly miss him. As Dr. Peterson pioneered the teaching of large lower-division survey courses on World Civilization (in addition to having pioneered online teaching of History at FIU), he touched the lives of thousands of students from all possible majors over the years – perhaps more than any faculty has ever done at FIU. A former student of Dr. Peterson remembered him this way: *“He is the kindest, most caring professor in the world who gives you chances to succeed.”* Another student wrote: *“Professor Peterson is a top-notch professor and human being.”* Another commented: *“Professor Peterson is the most helpful and intelligent professor FIU has to offer.”* Victor Uribe, his former chair in the History department, recollects: *“Brian was as student-centered as one can possibly be and dedicated his career almost entirely to teaching. He introduced active learning methods many years ago, when they had not yet become fashionable. He was progressive, even radical, and had a pure soul and a good nature. Students and colleagues shall miss him greatly.”*

We will all remember and appreciate his service and the impact he had during his time at our institution and the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, as well as the College of Arts, Sciences & Education.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Joyce, the Peterson family, his former colleagues, as well as his students and friends during this difficult time.