

Herald Times

Rose had big impact on public education

Longtime director of policy think tank, co-director of Gallup/PDK school poll dies

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Lowell Rose in 2003. Jeremy Hogan | Herald-Times

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Lowell C. Rose, of Bloomington, a renowned figure in the world of public education and a leader whose influence was felt nationally, died Sunday at Bloomington Hospital.

Rose, 77, was the former executive director of Indiana Urban Schools Association and executive director emeritus of Phi Delta Kappa International, the global education policy think tank based in Bloomington. He served as executive director for PDK International from 1971 to 1995.

After retirement, Rose continued to co-direct one of the most influential education polls, the Gallup/PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools. The poll is considered to be an anchor for setting the context in national discussions on education policies. The results of the poll, especially in the last 10 years under Rose's leadership, have informed debates over such controversial issues as vouchers, school accountability and the federal No Child Left Behind act.

William J. Bushaw, current executive director of PDK International, said Rose's effect as a lobbyist and leader on public education pushed the geographic borders.

"Lowell would drive to Indianapolis every day when the Legislature was in session. He sent out regular e-mail blasts to almost every school superintendent in the country, and those e-mails were read as carefully as any," Bushaw said. "He was so candid and forthright in what he wrote. People could trust him. Leaders trusted him. He was one of the smartest educators I've ever met, and I've been in this business for 40 years."

Bushaw said Rose's priorities were always clear, and his No. 1 concern was obvious.

"He told me several times, 'For America not to address the achievement gap, it is a social disgrace.' And even though he took great exception to the No Child Left Behind act, he fully embraced the idea of developing every child in America to be as successful as he or she could be," Bushaw said.

Alec Gallup, son of George Gallup and co-writer with Rose of the PDK/Gallup poll, said he was called Monday morning and informed of Rose's death.

"He's been the key guy. He's done a superb job," Gallup said by telephone from his home in Princeton, N.J. "We've been doing this particular survey for 40 years and it's a vital role in showing how the public feels about public education. Lowell himself felt it was vitally important the public be heard on these issues. It's going to be tough to replace him. We'll miss him."

An educator for more than 50 years, Rose, who earned his Ph.D. in School Administration from Purdue University, began his career as a junior and senior high school social studies teacher in DeMotte. He went on to several positions at the district level, eventually serving as the superintendent of the Kokomo-Center Township Consolidated School Corp. from 1964 to '67. In addition to his work in the school system and with state and international education organizations, Rose dedicated more than three decades to working with future education leaders as an adjunct professor at the IU School of Education.

Rose had been undergoing dialysis and his death was of natural causes.

Memorial services for Rose will be 11 a.m. Thursday at St. Paul's Catholic Center in Bloomington.