

Obituary: Prof. Joshua A. Fishman

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H-Judaic is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Professor Joshua A. ("Shikl") Fishman (1926-2015), one of the founding fathers of socio-linguistics, a lifelong scholar of Yiddish, and a recognized leader in such fields as bilingual education, language and ethnicity, multiculturalism, language planning, test construction and medical anthropology. Prof. Fishman spent the bulk of his academic career at Yeshiva University, where he was Distinguished University Research Professor of Social Sciences Emeritus. He also regularly served as visiting professor at Stanford (where his voluminous papers are now housed), as well as at NYU, CUNY and elsewhere. Biographical details and a list of Prof. Fishman's more than 25 published books may be found in the Wikipedia article devoted to his life and achievements (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua_Fishman); he also published more than 800 scholarly articles. Prof. Kenneth Moss of Johns Hopkins University has described Fishman as a "great scholar and fighter for Yiddish, yidishkayt, and the preservation of our language and its culture." On his official website (<http://www.joshuaafishman.com/>), Prof. Fishman preserved his own personal philosophy:

I have had the incredible good fortune to be exposed simultaneously to modern Western as well as to modern and classical Jewish thought, to secular and religious values, beliefs, ideals as well as theoretical and applied emphases, to the comforts of a language of wider communication (English) and a language of ethnic intimacy (Yiddish), to the infinite world of science, the eternal land of my ancestors, and the new world of democracy, opportunity and pluralism to which my parents came as adolescent immigrants. I have tried to combine all of these influences within myself as well as to contribute to them all. I consider both the tensions and the creativity resulting from these varied stimuli to constitute a unique heritage: an American-Jewish heritage to be treasured, cultivated, enriched and handed on.

We extend deepest condolences to his wife, Gella Schweid Fishman, to his children, including Prof. David Fishman, who is a member of this list, and to the entire extended family.

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Chair H-Judaic