

February 3, 2021

Greetings Friends and Alumni:

The Department of Economics at the University of New Mexico is pleased to announce the creation of the **Dr. Nathaniel Wollman Endowed Fund**. The purpose of the fund is to support faculty research in the department, and by this means to enrich the student experience in economics. This fund was created with the generosity of James Adams (UNM BA Economics, 1967), a former student, and his wife Jennifer.

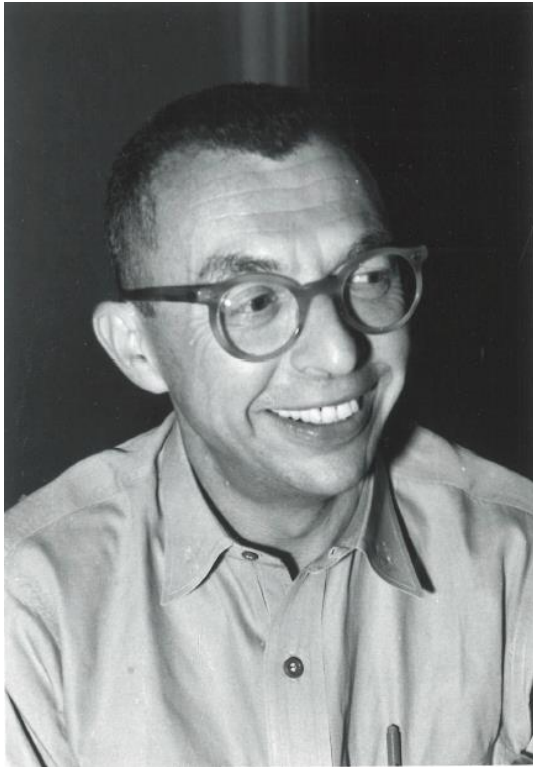
James remarks that,

“My experiences as a student of Dr. Wollman’s included excellent courses in micro theory and natural resource economics, and an independent study of public economics that changed the entire course of my professional life. It is rare to find a scholar in the grand tradition of economics seeking to solve important social problems, who combines these skills with a desire to pass these interests on to the next generation. Dr. Wollman was just such a one. Please join us as we move the Department of Economics forward in a new century, building on this great legacy. Just as the department looked after us when we were students, perhaps now is the time for us to look after it. To this end I have set up an initial dollar for dollar match up to \$25,000. Further matches are possible as needed.”

The Wollman family has expressed their deep gratitude to Dr. Adams and have made their own generous donations to the fund.

Dr. Wollman (1915-2012) was a long-time professor of economics at UNM (1948-1980), who also served as Department Chair (1960-1969), and as Dean of the *College of Arts and Sciences* (1969-1980). Dr. Wollman was known for being dedicated to his family, his profession, and his responsibilities as a citizen. Donations to the Wollman Fund can be made by contacting the Department of Economics, UNM, or by using the webpage link found here: <http://econ.unm.edu/> and here <https://www.unmfund.org/fund/dr-nathaniel-wollman-fund/>.

#1



#2



The above picture on the left (#1) shows Dr. Wollman in August 1960, in the year he became Chair of the Department of Economics. The above picture on the right (#2) shows Dr. Wollman, with his wife, Lenora Wollman. The picture below (#3) shows Dr. Wollman, with a student at a UNM graduation ceremony, during his time as Dean. All pictures graciously provided by the Wollman family.

#3



As a teacher, many of Dr. Wollman's students went on to careers in economics. As Department Chair, the Department of Economics at UNM underwent a period of rapid expansion. As Department Chair and then Dean, Dr. Wollman worked tirelessly to support the teaching and research efforts of others at UNM. More broadly, while Dean of Arts and Sciences at UNM, Dr. Wollman continued to represent UNM and New Mexico on a number of national and international committees and boards, including the National Resource Council of the National Academy of Sciences (NRC/NAS); this included chairing the Committee for International Environment Programs (CEIP) of the NRC/NAS Environmental Studies Board.

Among his own research efforts, were contributions of regional, national and international significance, focused on the area of water resources.

Of note, in 1959-1960, Dr. Wollman served as temporary staff for Resources for the Future in Washington DC, where he led and helped prepare the national report, *Water Resources Activities in the United States: Water Supply and Demand* (1960), for the Select Committee on Water Resources of the U.S. Senate. That national work was expanded in 1971 when Dr. Wollman co-authored the report, *The Outlook for Water: Quality, Quantity and National Growth* (Resources for the Future, Washington DC). In between, he spent time in Chile, and authored the book, *The Water Resources of Chile* (1968). Focused on New Mexico, and the San Juan and Middle Rio Grande basins, Dr. Wollman edited and co-authored the 1962 book, *The Value of Water in Alternative Uses* (University of New Mexico Press).

Such works by Dr. Wollman and co-authors reflected the evolution of concern growing in economics at the time that was the precursor to the emergence of the field of environmental and resource economics. Immediately post WWII, much of the focus remained on simply running out of natural resources (minerals and water, etc.). This was consistent with Dr. Wollman's technical analyses (including early computer models) looking at water supply availability against projected growth in demand post-WWII as population and per-capita consumption were growing rapidly. The key economics insight was to recognize that prices in a market system would prompt conservation and encourage substitution and technological change. All true, but by the late 1960's there was a turn towards deeper recognition of environmental quality issues, degradation of natural systems and concerns over protection of pristine environments. There was also a broader recognition of market failure due to negative externalities (or so-called "third party effects" such as pollution), under-provision of public goods (such as wilderness areas), and information problems where typical consumers may lack necessary insights on ecological problems. Key insights from Dr. Wollman's work included the recognition that for many growing urban areas, environmental quality issues would become just as important as quantity and resource availability issues.

As relayed at the time of Dr. Wollman's passing in 2012¹:

Having discovered the magic of New Mexico in 1948, Mr. Wollman never wanted to live elsewhere. During the 1950s, he, his wife Lenora, and their two sons spent one month

¹ *The Life and Career of Nathaniel Wollman*, prepared by Eric Wollman, 2012.

every summer in a small cabin on a pristine trout stream above 9,000 feet in the mountains of north central New Mexico. The experience profoundly influenced his outlook as a resource economist. Mr. Wollman believed that standard economic analyses had not properly or adequately accounted for the value to society of a pristine natural environment.

Of note, in 1967, Dr. Wollman wrote an article entitled "The New Economics of Resources" [*Daedalus*, Vol. 96, No. 4, America's Changing Environment (Fall, 1967), pp. 1099-1114]. In it, on page 1107, Dr. Wollman wrote:

"In coming to a decision with regard to environmental quality, these officials face a double-barrelled question: What do the people want -- how much of other things (measured as a sum of money) are they willing to give up to enjoy these benefits of nature? And do we accept the idea that people's judgements truly reflect their welfare? We can find out what people want in various ways: directly, by asking them; indirectly, by inferring preferences from observed action; and, combining the direct and indirect methods, by exposing people experimentally to alternative situations and asking their reaction as well as observing their behavior....I assume that we will learn more about what people want, and the knowledge of consumer preferences will help us reduce the guesswork."

Such thinking was prescient of much of the work to emerge in the field of environmental and resource economics in subsequent decades. Not surprisingly, in 1967/1968, the Department of Economics at UNM, under his leadership, became one of the first in the country to offer a graduate field in resource economics.

Today, Department of Economics faculty members pursue policy-relevant research in the complementary areas of environmental and resources economics (including water resources), development and sustainability and public/health economics.

Contributions to the **Dr. Nathaniel Wollman Endowed Fund**, will go to help support such faculty research efforts.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Berrens

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