We Have Lost a Friend

Dedication to Dr. Everett M. Rogers
of The Innovation Journal, Volume 10(3).

Everett M. Rogers, a pioneer in the field of innovation dissemination and communication died October 31, 2004 at the age of 73. Dr. Rogers was a well-known academic who gave many keynote addresses, including to the American Society for Public Administration. He had attended the full workshop and had chaired a session of the Workshop on Public Sector Innovation, sponsored by The Innovation Journal, three local universities and the City of Ottawa, held in Ottawa, Canada in February 2002. At that time he also spoke at the Innovation Salon and gave a keynote address to the Canadian Centre for Management Development Conference on Public Service Innovation. His wife and partner of 15 years, Corinne Shefner-Rogers, and his mother-in-law from Montreal, Julianna Shefner, both people of vitality, also attended the Salon.

Dr. Rogers had been a member of The Innovation Journal editorial board since 2000. In 2004, The Innovation Journal had published Mario Rivera and Everett Rogers, "Evaluating Public Sector Innovation in Networks: Extending the Reach of the National Cancer Institute’s Web-based Health Communication Intervention Research Initiative." The paper published in this issue, “Complex Adaptive Systems and the Diffusion of Innovations” by Everett Rogers, Una Medina, Mario Rivera and Cody Wiley is the second paper The Innovation Journal has published by Everett Rogers. It is, of necessity, the last. We will miss our friend, colleague, and benefactor.

The Innovation Journal is proud to have been chosen as the venue for Dr. Rogers’ last paper. Like so much of his work, this paper explores the frontiers of innovation. We believe it to be a seminal piece on complexity and innovation.

Dr. Rogers is best known for developing the communication theory of innovation, "diffusion of innovations." It offers an explanation of how new ideas are incorporated into a culture. The theory has significantly influenced the social sciences. His book on this topic, Diffusion of Innovations, originally published in 1962 under another title, is in its fifth edition and still widely used by educators and researchers.

Rogers (Ev to all his friends) grew up on a family farm in Carroll County, Iowa. After graduating with a degree in agriculture from Iowa State University and serving for two years in the Korean War, Ev returned to Iowa State where he earned doctoral degrees in sociology and statistics in 1957. Ev then embarked on a 47-year career as university professor, author, researcher and health education proponent that took him around the globe.

Ev wrote 30 books and hundreds of articles. He recently authored or co-authored books on the history of communication study, technology transfer and the rise of technologies, organizational aspects of health communication campaigns, media agenda-setting, intercultural communication, the entertainment-education strategy, and the role of information strategy in India's development. He was recently named in the Who's Who of Social Sciences Higher Education as an "influential expert" in his field. Ev worked on family planning communication projects in Korea, India, Indonesia and Tanzania. He
conducted research on HIV/AIDS prevention in Thailand, South Africa, Kenya and Brazil.

Ev taught at six American universities, including Stanford University, and six universities in Europe, Latin America and the Far East. He began his work at the University of New Mexico (UNM) in 1993 as the journalism department chairman where he served until 1997. During that time, he helped develop a new doctoral program for inter-cultural communication. In 2002, Ev was selected as the university's 47th Annual Research Lecturer— the highest honour UNM bestows on its faculty. He continued to teach at UNM until fall of 2004 when he was forced to retire due to illness.

While Ev leaves a full legacy of speeches, publications and teaching, his greatest legacy may be the influence he has had on those around him, especially his students. A generous and talented man, Ev constantly reached out to others. An example can be seen in his influence and relationships with his co-authors of the paper published in this issue.

Una Medina met Ev in the fall of 2000. She was a student in his statistics and Diffusion of Innovations classes at the University of New Mexico (UNM) and worked closely with him on two National Institutes of Health grants and five research projects over the last four years of his life. Ev was Una's undergraduate research advisor, chair of her M.A. program and masters' thesis advisor, and until his untimely death her doctoral studies advisor and mentor. Cody Wiley was also a student of Ev's, working with him on a graduate research project as well as on the present article.

Mario Rivera was named Regents' Professor of Public Administration at UNM in 2000, when Ev was named Regents' Professor of Communication. Discussing their respective experiences in Africa at a joint awards event, they decided to collaborate in a review of diffusion of innovations theory in light of developments in the study of cultural communications and complex networks. The present article and a research note previously published in the Innovation Journal were among the principal products of that collaboration.

All three coauthors were deeply struck, as were many others whom Ev helped and guided, with his easy generosity, expansive spirit, and great mind. Working with Everett Rogers was for them and for many a life-changing event.

It is with great pleasure but also with sadness that Volume 10(3) of The Innovation Journal, published on The Innovation Journal’s tenth anniversary, is dedicated to Everett M. Rogers. Thank you from all of us, Ev.

Eleanor Glor and Mario Rivera
November, 2005