

Douglass Cater Leaves Legacy of Service

Douglass Cater, Distinguished Lecturer in Political Science and Public Administration at AUM, died on September 15, 1995. Mr. Cater, a Montgomery native, had an unparalleled career in public affairs having made outstanding contributions in journalism, government, education, and letters.

He left Montgomery at a young age to attend Phillips-Exeter Academy. From there he went to Harvard University where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees. As he progressed through his remarkable career, he received seven honorary doctorates from many prestigious universities including The Johns Hopkins University, Brandeis University, and the University of Alabama.

His career in journalism had its beginning as an editor of the *Harvard Crimson* during his undergraduate years at Harvard. His rise to the top ranks of journalism began when he joined *The Reporter* magazine in 1950. With *The Reporter* he served as Washington Editor and then National Affairs Editor before he left this influential publication for government service in 1964. During his tenure with *The Reporter* he authored the highly acclaimed *The Fourth Branch of Government* (1959) that examined the role of the press in national society. The *Fourth Branch's* influence on American journalism continues as a number of prominent political scientists participated in a roundtable discussion to assess its impact at the 1994 American Political Science Association convention in New York. In a nationally syndicated column written a few days after Mr. Cater's death, Edwin Yoder commented, referring to his work, that "it was Douglass Cater, more than anyone else, who changed the rules of American journalism, and very much for the better. And that was only one of perhaps a dozen distinctions that made him the best of a fine generation." Later in his career he served several years as Vice Chairman of the *Sunday Observer* of London and Chairman of the *Observer International*.

His government service began during World War Two when he worked as an analyst in the Office of Strategic Services. From 1964 through 1968 he served as a Special Assistant to President Lyndon Baines Johnson where his portfolio was education and health policy. While President Johnson's advisor, he was instrumental in the development and passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Medicare, the Higher Education Act, the Public Broadcasting Corporation Act, and many other policy initiatives of the Great Society.

Douglass Cater's associations with and contributions to higher education are equally impressive. Throughout his career he held visiting appointments and lectureships at the most prestigious institutions of higher education and research including Princeton University, Wesleyan University, UCLA, Stanford University, the University of Alabama, the Brookings Institution, and the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. Most likely his crowning achievement in the area of education was his nine-year tenure as President of Washington College, the tenth oldest in the nation on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Because of his tireless efforts to raise funds for Washington College, this fine institution was able to survive and prosper when, before his presidency, its future was uncertain at best.

Retirement in 1990 from Washington College, however, did not end Douglass Cater's association with higher education. After his return to Montgomery in 1991 he graciously accepted AUM's offer to become its first Distinguished Lecturer. For four years until the Summer of 1995, he informed and delighted AUM undergraduate and graduate students in his quarterly lectures on a variety of public policy issues. In an act of great generosity he donated 2500 books from his personal library to AUM in 1993.

Of Douglass Cater's six acclaimed books including one novel, none has had more impact on the discipline of political science than *Power in Washington* (1964). The volume is a classic in its analysis

of policy formulation and development at the national level. The term "subgovernment" which characterizes policy clusters that tend to dominate a distinct portion of the policy arena was coined by Douglass Cater. A great tribute to this gentleman of letters is that the term "subgovernment" is a part of the lexicon of public policy and many who use the term are unaware of the person who coined it.

Our sincere sympathies are extended to his lovely wife, Libby, and their children and grandchildren. His legacy to them is one of remarkable accomplishments that will reflect positively on the Cater name for many years to come.

We will always miss Doug Cater, a dear friend and colleague.

[\[Contents\]](#)[\[Courses\]](#)[\[Faculty\]](#)[\[Internet\]](#)[\[News\]](#)[\[Schedule\]](#)[\[AUM\]](#)

Send mail to ps/pa_webmaster with questions or comments about this web site.
Last modified: Wednesday June 18, 1997 03:27 PM