Seymour Melman

Seymour Melman, professor emeritus of industrial engineering and management research, Dec. 16 at his home in Manhattan. He was 86 years old.

Melman was considered the grandfather of the economic concept movement, the process of transforming military facilities into civilian uses. A noted antiracist activist, he was critical of United States military spending, contending it diverted funds from domestic programs.

For 50 years, Melman wrote and spoke about the economic topics, including workplace democracy, evaluations of industrial productivity and the distribution of labor and capital, administrator disorganization and disarray in the U.S. and abroad. He argued against the belief that World War II helped end the Great Depression, countering that it was other factors that reversed the economy. He taught at Columbia for 40 years and encouraged a generation of engineers to consider the mechanics of industrial production and the social impact of their work.

Melman is the former presi- dent of the Association for Economic Education, vice president of the New York Academy of Sciences, cochair of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy; and chair of The National Commission for Economic Conversion and Disarmament. He was a consultant to the United Nations on economic conversion in 1979 and 1980.


Born in the Bronx on Dec. 30, 1919. He served in the army.during World War II and received a B.A. in economics from Columbia in 1949. Survived by his brother, Myron.

William Silverman

William Silverman, the father of neonatal intensive care, Dec. 16 at his home in Greenwich. He was 99 years old.

Silverman’s work in the neonatal intensive care unit at Babies Hospital of Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center (which later became Columbia Children’s Hospital of New York-Presbyterian) in the 1950s helped determine that the concentrations of oxygen—then used to treat premature infants—could permanently damage their eyesight. The condition, now known as retinopathy of prema- turity, blinding an estimated 10,000 children worldwide. As his career witnessed the rapid introduction of new drugs and procedures, he achieved the increased use of randomized, controlled clinical trials. In his later years, Silverman became a controversial critic of the neonato- logy practices that saved the lives of premature infants but left them with severe physical and mental disabilities. Silverman advised that parents should have the option to instruct physicians not to administer the treatments.

Born in Cleveland and raised in Los Angeles, Silverman received a bachelor’s degree from UCLA and attended medical school at the University of California, San Francisco. He also attended from 1939. He served in the army during World War II and received a B.A. in economics from City College in 1939. He served in the army during World War II and received a B.A. in economics from City College in 1939. He served in the army during World War II and received a B.A. in economics from City College in 1939. He served in the army during World War II and received a B.A. in economics from City College in 1939.