

# UC SANTA BARBARA

## Office of the Chancellor

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September 4, 2019

**Dear Members of our Campus Community,**

It is with great sadness that I write to inform you that Professor Emeritus Wade Clark Roof passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, August 24. He was 80. News of his death sparked an outpouring of warm remembrances from his campus colleagues and scholarly peers.

One of the nation's leading sociologists of religion, Professor Roof leaves a towering legacy as an academic, as well as an influential body of work. He had a substantial impact on public discourse about contemporary American religion, and his publications continue to shape how new scholars are trained in the sociology of religion. He received his M.Div. from Yale University in 1964, and his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina in 1971.

Dr. Roof joined our campus in 1990 as our J.F. Rowny Professor of Religion and Society, an appointment he held until his retirement in 2017. Previously, he was Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He was Founding Director of our Walter Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life, and led the center for 15 years, from 2002-2017. He also served as Chair of our Department of Religious Studies from 1999-2004, leading the department through an extraordinary period of growth in faculty appointments and in the department's endowments.

As chief architect of our Capps Center, Professor Roof spearheaded a development campaign that raised more than \$2 million. Under his leadership, the Center emerged as a hub for public humanities programming and forum discussions on topics such as poverty, nuclear power, religious tolerance, sustainable farming, race and aggressive policing, and democracy in the digital age. He guided the Center to national prominence for its commitment to the importance of dialogue. The Center also supports internship programs and graduate fellowships.

Within his field, Professor Roof is perhaps best known for his 1993 book, "A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation." It is widely held that the book made an impact not just on academia, but also on religious communities themselves. Professor Roof published 14 books on American religion; more than 100 articles, chapters, and essays; 24 public commentaries; and 40 book reviews.

He served as President of the Religious Research Association from 1992-1994, and as President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion from 1995-1997. An expert in his field, he made several media appearances on outlets such as NBC Nightly News and Good Morning America, and was quoted in cover stories of the New York Times, Newsweek, and Time. He also served as a consultant to PBS and NBC.

In recognition of the immense impact of his life's work, Professor Roof received the 2018 Association for the Sociology of Religion's Lifetime Achievement Award, and the 2019 American Academy of Religion's Martin Marty Award for the Public Understanding of Religion.

A tremendous scholar, teacher, mentor, and leader, Clark will be deeply missed by us all. We send our sincerest condolences to his family and many loved ones. Our campus flag will be lowered on Wednesday, September 18, in memory of his beautiful life and many contributions.

A funeral for Professor Roof will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church, 1500 State Street, this Saturday, September 7, at 2 p.m., with a reception to follow.

Sincerely,

Henry T. Yang  
Chancellor