Professor Emeritus Marvin L. Niehuss, '30

Professor Emeritus Marvin L. Niehuss, '30, died in March in Ithaca, New York, at the age of 100.

He retired from the University of Michigan in 1973 after a half-century-long association with the U-M that began when he became a student here in 1920. He earned his B.A. at the University in 1925.

Niehuss' service to the U-M and the Law School was so significant that upon his retirement the Board of Regents took note that his "commitment and service to the University have been rarely matched" and that "few men in the history of the University have come to know it so well or have done more to help shape its destiny."

During the 1930s, Niehuss taught economics and law. As director of emergency training during World War II, he coordinated all of the Pentagon's programs on the U-M campus.

Niehuss moved to the U-M administration after World War II and remained there for a quarter century; he served as vice president responsible for appropriations from the state legislature; during the 1950s he was dean of faculties, a role in which he oversaw the University's academic life; and in 1962 he became executive vice president.

He returned to the Law School to teach in 1968.

Niehuss was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and earned his high school diploma at Greenville Military Academy in Greenville, Mississippi.

Survivors include two children (Niehuss' son, John Marvin Niehuss, is a 1962 graduate of the Law School), three stepchildren, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

The family held a memorial service for Niehuss in Ann Arbor in early May.

Rx for autonomy

Carl E. Schneider, '79, shies away from absolutes, especially when it comes to how people decide what they decide. For example, ask him to discuss “Autonomy and its Discontent: Should Patients Make Their Own Medical Decisions?” as he did in the first talk of the winter term lecture series sponsored by the University's Life Sciences, Values, and Society Program, and Schneider will lead you to understand that, for a variety of reasons, most seriously ill patients do not want to make their own medical decisions.

He'll also lead you to understand that, in the end, you are you and it’s your call.

Schneider, the Chauncey Stillman Professor for Ethics, Morality, and the Practice of Law, has studied and written widely on the issues of bioethics and medical decision making. His research has led him to conclude that the doctrine of informed consent seldom works well, that physicians overestimate the problems of malpractice, and that living wills are failures because people seldom can predict what they want done at the end of their lives.

In fact, he told a questioner after his talk, “My experience is that what patients want from physicians is advice. Then they can ratify it.”

The Sunday afternoon lectures are presented in Honigman Auditorium in Hutchins Hall.

Other speakers included:

• Sofia Merajver, of the U-M School of Medicine’s Department of Internal Medicine, speaking on “Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Syndroms: Genetic Analysis and Cancer Risk Management.”

• Sharon Kardia, of the U-M School of Public Health’s Public Health Genetics Program, speaking on “Genetics of Hypertension.”

• Gus Rosania, of the U-M College of Pharmacy, speaking on “Pharmacogenomics: Dilemmas and Challenges.”