

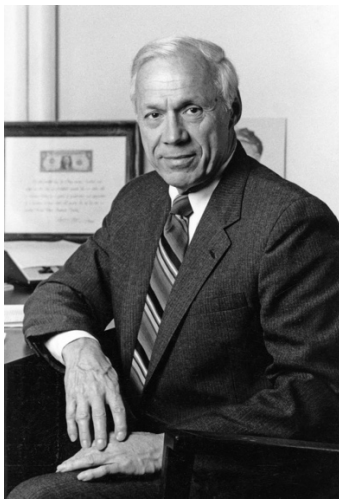
Casey Jarchow

Michael Flynn, William H. Laird Professor of Linguistics and the Liberal Arts, emeritus
January, 2025

During my first year at Carleton (1986-87) I was given an office in the Classics Department in Leighton Hall. The great thing about this was that I got to know colleagues Nancy Wilkie and the redoubtable Jackson Bryce. I'm not sure whose office I was in, but the next year that person returned and so I had to find a new home. This turned out to be in the basement of Scoville Hall at the very back of the building just inside the back door. (Scoville back then was a kind of hodgepodge of departments and offices, nothing like the beautiful building it is today.)

This was a stroke of luck, since I was in the midst of an experienced and formerly very powerful group. Across the hall was the office of Frank Wright, Carleton's Treasurer Emeritus. A member of the class of 1950, he went on to work at the College for 38 years. While a student, he lettered in three sports and met his wife Louise ('51).

Former President Bob Edwards wrote about him: "Frank has also been the conscience of the College, defending its highest values. He taught me an important truth for a college president to absorb. It is that academic freedom is dependent upon sound financial management. Faculty are intellectually constrained if they cannot constantly improve the quality of their instrumentation, journals, and library collections. They cannot be open-hearted and generous teachers if their personal financial situations are insecure."



Frank Wright

To me, Frank was always kind and encouraging, something that meant a great deal to me as new faculty member.

Next door was Merrill E. (Casey) Jarchow, Professor Emeritus of American History and Dean of Men from 1946 to 1966 and College Historian. He wrote *Carleton: The First Century* and later followed it up with *Carleton Moves Confidently Into Its Second Century*. During these post-war years, Carleton men, many of whom were soldiers returning from the war, lived on the west side of campus. They were

an energetic bunch, and there were I understand a number of sharp conflicts with Dean Jarchow, who was something of a disciplinarian, in addition to being an admired raconteur and the golf coach.



Dean Jarchow with proctors in 1958. Casey is standing in the center, Mike Armacost is seated on the far right (we think). Thanks to Tom Lamb in the Archives Office for finding this picture for me.

During my time in Scoville there was a steady stream of visitors to see Casey, mostly alumni, who would sometimes stop in to say hello to me. They would often tell stories of how they got on the wrong side of the Dean, and were sent home for a few weeks or even a term. They nevertheless very strongly admired Casey, and were grateful for his guidance in the days they were students.

One story I remember concerned a student who came to Carleton from a southern state. He had brought with him a confederate flag. One night, he climbed to the top of Willis Hall and ran his flag up the flagpole. The next morning around 8:00 the phone rang in his room. His roommate answered, and it was Dean Jarchow. "Is Robert there?" His roommate said, no, he had just gone to class. "Well tell him to report to my office as soon as you see him."

Robert soon went to see Casey, who was severely critical, threatening him with suspension if something like this ever happened again. Robert was apologetic, promising that he would henceforth keep his flag to himself, but he wondered how Casey knew so quickly that he was the culprit. He turned to leave, and just as he got to the door, Dean Jarchow said, "And one more thing. Tell your mother that she does not have to sew your name into every goddam thing you bring to Carleton."

During this time, I was on the staff of the Chuo-Carleton Summer Language Program. Students from Chuo University in Tokyo would come to the campus for a couple of weeks, and we would do some language teaching, and introduce to students to some aspects of American life. As a part of this, we would pair them up and arrange for them to interview someone in town. I thought Casey would be a perfect subject. So I went next door and explained what I had in mind, and asked if he would agree to be interviewed. I told him it would not last long, maybe twenty minutes or so.

He paused for quite a long time and then said, “Mike, I’d like to help you out, but, well, I don’t know. We lost quite a few fine young men in that war. I’m not comfortable with this idea.” I knew him well enough by then that I felt I could convince him to change his mind. “It was a long time ago,” I said, “and these students were born over twenty years after the war’s end. They’re here to learn about the US, and I think you would be a great teacher.” He paused again, and finally said, “Okay. Let’s try it.”

The next week two young women showed up to interview Casey. I introduced them, and then went next door to my office. I couldn’t resist eavesdropping. The conversation was a little stiff at first, but he started to warm up and the students had many questions. After about a half an hour Casey said, “Well, I know you girls have other important things to do, so I’ll let you go.” But the students asked a few more questions and Casey got into telling some nice stories. They were there for another hour. Finally, they expressed their gratitude and got up to leave.

“One more thing,” Casey said. “When you go back to Tokyo, I want you to go over to the American Embassy, and ask to see the ambassador, Mike Armacost. Tell them Casey Jarchow sent you.”

Michael Armacost was class of 1958 (naturally married another member of that class, Roberta Bray). He was an outstanding athlete, scoring more than 1,000 points as a member of the men’s basketball team from 1955 to 1958. He was the president of his class. He went on to a distinguished career in the US State Department. He was appointed ambassador to the Philippines in 1982 and the ambassador to Japan in 1989. He was later the head of the Brookings Institution.

I thought it was nice of Casey to suggest this, but what I didn’t expect was that these students would do just what Casey said. And a few weeks later, I’m in my office when I hear Casey. “Mike!” I rushed in there to find him staring at this picture, he was weeping, just barely detectable.

I thought, this is Carleton at its finest.



Two Japanese students with Ambassador Armacost at the ambassador’s residence in Tokyo.