Elinor Ostrom
1933–2012

Elinor Ostrom received many high honors in her long and productive career, including a Nobel Prize. But perhaps her greatest legacy will be through the hundreds of students, researchers, and colleagues who learned from and were inspired by her.

She was Distinguished Professor and Arthur F. Bentley Professor of Political Science in the College of Arts and Sciences and professor in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. She was founding director and senior research director of The Vincent and Elinor Ostrom Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis.

She is the only woman to receive the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, which she shared with Oliver Williamson in 2009. The Nobel committee awarded her the prize “for her analysis of economic governance, especially the commons.”

Ostrom was known for her remarkable energy and appetite for work, her down-to-earth manner, and her strong loyalty to students and colleagues.

Born August 7, 1933, she worked her way through college and earned a PhD in political science from UCLA, despite being warned that women were unlikely to work in academia. An IU Bloomington faculty member since 1965, she conducted research on topics ranging from urban police departments to groundwater basins, irrigation systems, pasture lands, forests, and fisheries.

In her book *Governing the Commons* and in many other publications, she demonstrated that groups can effectively manage resources without resorting to government control or private ownership. Elinor and Vincent Ostrom received the University Medal, the highest award bestowed by Indiana University, in 2010. She was named to *Time* magazine’s list of the world’s 100 most influential people in April 2012.