

S

Newsletters

Sign In

READ MORE



Image shows suspected SF motorcyclist who



Calif. lawmakers jet to Hawaii despite COVID-19...



94% of Calif. is in purple tier: Here's a look at...



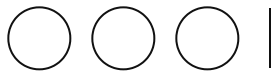
News // Bay Area & State

# Morris Lewenstein, S.F. State pioneer in social science



Nanette Asimov, Chronicle Staff Writer

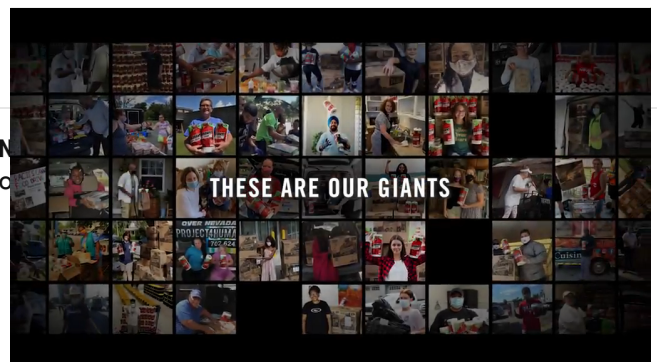
Updated: Jan. 15, 2012 11:51 p.m.



Morris R. Lewenstein, a veteran education professor and founder of San Francisco State University's first social science program, died Saturday of a heart attack at Kaiser Hospital in South San Francisco. He was 79.

Known to family and friends as Morrie, Professor Lewenstein influenced generations of high school social studies teachers during his 40 years at San Francisco State and as co-author of the high school text "Our American Government Today," in 1957.

ADVERTISEMENT  
Article continues below



Before retiring in 1985, Professor Lewenstein helped design the school's nationally recognized general education program, under then-President J. Paul Leonard. He also served as secretary of the Academic Senate and as legislative chair of the California State University Retired Faculty Association.

But Professor Lewenstein was never content to let his interest in social science reside on a dusty shelf, either before retirement

"He was a lifelong student, always ready to learn. I met Morris Lewenstein of Burlingame, his wife of 45 years

While still at San Francisco State, he co-directed



for Chad and Niger and traveled to those countries to oversee the project.

**ADVERTISEMENT**

Article continues below this ad

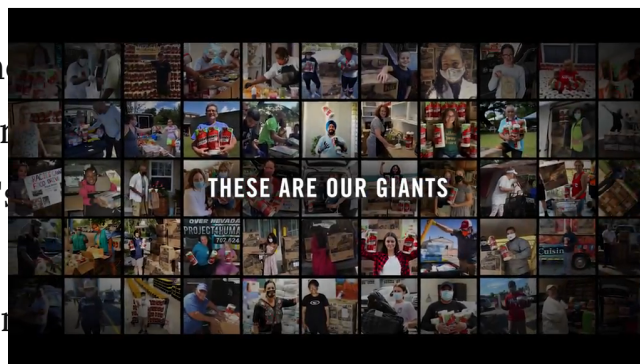
In retirement, Professor Lewenstein decided to learn Spanish. His wife, who taught English as a second language, was his inspiration.

"But he went way beyond me," she recalled with a laugh. "Whatever he undertook, he did with diligence."

In fact, he traveled six times to a language school where he was also learning Spanish and who kidded him, periodically. The teachers always singled out the professor's

Even as a boy tucked away in the remote mining town of

educator distinguished himself, earning a scholarship to the University of Chicago,



from which he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1944. He then took a Ph. D. from the University of Illinois in 1953.

**ADVERTISEMENT**

Article continues below this ad

An avid reader who enjoyed bicycle riding, Professor Lewenstein had a sense of adventure throughout his life. He was the kind of person who thought nothing of striking up a conversation with a stranger if an opportunity to practice Spanish presented itself.

## Most Popular

- 1.** When snow meets fall: Beautiful photos capture 'snow
- 2.** California passed Prop. 19. Here's what that means for



### 3. 94% of California is in the purple tier: Here's a look at the Bay Area

---

### 4. Indoor dining is closed again. Some Bay Area restaurant workers are relieved.

---

### 5. Here's how California's COVID-19 risk level compares to other states

---

'It's a few hours behind': Here's when the Tuesday storm will hit the San Francisco Bay Area

### 6.

---

### 7. Ghirardelli family mansion hits the market for \$5.5M

And this year, after learning that Spanish-speaking patients at the Samaritan House Free Medical Clinic of San Mateo had trouble communicating with the staff, Professor Lewenstein became a volunteer translator.

Among his greatest joys was spending time with his two young grandsons, Sam and Max Jenkins of Tampa, Fla., whom he taught to swim the crawl.

Professor Lewenstein was also a member of Peninsula Temple Shalom.

In addition to his wife and grandsons, Professor Lewenstein is survived by two sons, Jay Lewenstein of San Diego and Dan Jenkins of Tampa, and a brother, Harry Lewenstein of Palo Alto.

Contributions may be sent to the Samaritan H

San Mateo Drive, Suite 2, San Mateo, CA 94401

**Sign up for The Daily newsletter**

