

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**  
**on Behalf of Robert Aponte**  
**1947-2020**  
**Associate Professor of Sociology, IUPUI**

The Department of Sociology mourns the passing of Dr. Robert Aponte. He impacted innumerable people through his research, teaching, mentorship, activism, and friendship. His commitment to justice, concern for people on the margins, and warm sense of humor were apparent to everyone he met.

Robert was an Associate Professor of Sociology and an Adjunct Associate Professor of Latino Studies. He received his PhD from the University of Chicago in 1991 and joined the Sociology Department at IUPUI in 1996. He served as department chair from 2003-2010, helped found the Latino Studies Certificate Program, and was the faculty advisor for the Latino Studies Student Association. Prior to his arrival at IUPUI, Robert helped found the Julian Samora Research Institute at Michigan State University, the premier Latino research institute in the Midwest.

Robert's research interests and social commitments were wide ranging, including Latin American immigration, Latinos in the Midwest, race and ethnicity, drug policy, police violence, and anti-poverty policy. He published his research in many academic journals, such as *Social Problems*, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *Latino Studies Journal*, *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*, *Global Agenda for Social Justice*, *Race and Human Rights*, and *Journal of Latino-Latin American Studies*. He was also the principal author of *Latinos in Indiana: Characteristics, Challenges and Recommendations for Action*, a research report prepared for Indiana Governor Frank O'Bannon.

Robert's commitment to conducting research that addressed social injustices and led to positive social change was deep and abiding. As just one example of this deep commitment, he completed his last research article—"Police Homicides: The Terror of 'American Exceptionalism'"—just ten days before his death.

Robert was a beloved teacher who developed strong relationships with his undergraduate and graduate students. He was particularly attentive to the experiences and needs of students of color and students who struggled with mental health and substance abuse challenges, and he formed strong bonds with students who shared his commitment to justice and social change. In recognition of this impact, he received the Latino Studies Program's *Distinguished Award* and the *Luis Alberto Ambroggio Center for Latino Studies' Outstanding Professor of the Year Award*.

Robert touched many lives. He inspired students, had a ready smile for colleagues, and worked until the end of his life to make the world a more just and compassionate place.

Robert leaves behind his loving partner of 14 years, and our colleague, Dr. Carrie Foote; their 16-year-old son Sami Ardah; his three adult children—Nina, Michael, and Bobby Aponte; his grandson Oliver Aponte, and his brother Willie Aponte, among many other loving relatives. He will be deeply missed and long remembered.

**THUS, BE IT RESOLVED, that this memorial resolution be placed in the minutes of the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Faculty Council with a moment of silence observed in his honor. A copy of this memorial resolution will be delivered to Robert's life partner and his children.**

This resolution is written on behalf of Robert Aponte's students and the faculty and staff of the Department of Sociology and School of Liberal Arts. The resolution was prepared by Brian Steensland, Chair of the Department of Sociology.