

**Ted G. Jelen**  
**Hinsdale South High School**  
**Class of 1970**

**Inducted: November 16, 2021**



Thaddeus (Ted) Gerard Jelen, professor of political science at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada, passed away on November 21, 2017 due to a long illness linked to a professorship abroad. He was 65. Ted received his PhD in political science from Ohio State in 1979, taught for a year at the University of Kentucky, and then went to Illinois Benedictine College, later renamed as Benedictine University, where he served for many years as department chair. Limited computer resources at Benedictine forced Ted to buy the General Social Survey every year, and then pay a data company to subset the variables to a file size that the school's computers could handle. From 1990 to 1991 he was a visiting professor at Georgetown University, and the availability of more powerful computers and ICPSR datasets led to an explosion of research. He was hired as chair at UNLV and served in that role from 1997 to 2003, and then remained a faculty member there until his death. Ted was a ubiquitous presence at conferences in the US and abroad for many years, always found in the hotel lobby with a big smile, a funny story, and genuine interest in your latest project, which he always proclaimed to be "really interesting."

Ted was a prodigious scholar, with 15 authored or edited books, 81 peer reviewed articles, and 64 book chapters. His published work has been cited thousands of times in political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, history, gender studies, and religious studies journals in the US and internationally. His graduate work centered on political theory, and his work frequently connected careful empirical analysis to broader theoretical themes. Ted had a research agenda that reflected his upbringing as a Polish kid in Chicago: the Catholic Church, religion and the state, sex, abortion, gender, and guns. He published several articles comparing attitudes on gender and abortion between the US and Poland. To that end, he was proud to be named to the Roll of Honor of Polish Science by the Polish Ministry of Science in 2001. His knowledge of Chicago politics also left him with a seemingly inexhaustible stream of colorful stories. Ted wrote on a wide variety of subjects but his major contributions were in the field of religion and politics, gender politics, and the politics of abortion, in each case focusing mainly on the US, but also with a number of papers in comparative politics. He focused on two broad themes in religion and politics—the political mobilization of religion and church/state relations. In the former, he published two books on congregations and clergy in Greencastle Indiana, a variety of papers on how religious context affects the way that religion influences individuals, and several important papers on measurement issues. His edited book *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective* was translated into Spanish and chapters that Ted wrote were translated into Bosnian and Hebrew and frequently cited. His most important work on church-state relations was a fine book *To Serve God and Mammon, Second Edition* by Georgetown University Press. He also wrote on public attitudes on church state issues. He published papers laying out research agendas in the field in 1988 and again in 1998. Just as important to the subfield, Ted laid out a publishing roadmap, showing that it was possible to pursue a career exploring religion and politics. He published in a wide range of outlets across the social sciences, but also demonstrated that it was possible to appear in the top political science journals including *Journal of Politics* and *American Journal of Political Science*.