

**Institute for Conflict Analysis
and Resolution**

Occasional Paper 7

Resolution: Transforming Conflict and Violence

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About the Author

James H. Laue, Ph.D., came to the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in 1987 as the Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Professor of Conflict Resolution, the first endowed professorial chair in conflict resolution in the United States.

After receiving master's and doctoral degrees in sociology from Harvard University, Dr. Laue began his career at the Community Relations Service, a branch of the U.S. Department of Justice. There, under the guidance of social activist Roger Wilkins, he mediated civil rights disputes in Selma, Alabama, worked to resolve the Memphis garbage collectors strike, and was one of the first to reach Martin Luther King, Jr. after he was fatally shot on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

Prior to joining the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Dr. Laue held various academic and administrative positions at Washington University, Harvard Medical School, Emory University, Hollins College, and the University of Missouri at St. Louis and was the director of The Conflict Clinic, Inc., from 1984 to 1987. He is the author of many articles, chapters, and training materials on conflict intervention roles, the ethics of intervention, and other issues in the field.

Dr. Laue, active in both national and international conflict analysis and resolution arenas, has served as a mediator and trainer in a range of major policy conflicts involving such issues as urban planning, transportation, water rights, government reorganization, and race relations.

In 1979, at the request of President Carter, Dr. Laue was vice chair of a commission created to establish a national academy to teach peacemaking techniques. The work of that commission led to the creation in 1984 of the U.S. Institute of Peace, a government agency established to promote research, education, and training on international peace and conflict resolution.

About the Institute

The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University has as its principal mission to advance the understanding and resolution of significant and persistent human conflicts among individuals, groups, communities, identity groups, and nations. To fulfill this mission, the Institute works in four areas: academic programs, consisting of a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and a Master of Science (M.S.) in Conflict Analysis and Resolution; research and publication; a clinical and consultancy service offered through the Applied Practice and Theory Program and by individual Institute faculty and senior associates; and public education.

The Applied Practice and Theory (APT) Program draws on faculty, practitioners, and students to form teams to analyze and help resolve broad areas of conflict. These three-to-five-year projects currently address such topics as crime and conflict, jurisdictional conflicts within governments, conflict resolution in deeply divided communities (Northern Ireland, South Africa, Beirut), and conflict in school systems.

Associated with the Institute are a number of organizations that promote and apply conflict resolution principles. These include the Consortium on Peace Research, Education, and Development (COPRED), a networking organization; the National Conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution (NCPCR), offering a biannual conference for conflict resolution practitioners; Northern Virginia Mediation Service (NVMS), offering mediation services to Northern Virginia residents involved in civil or minor criminal disputes; and Starting Small, teaching conflict resolution and problem-solving skills to children.

Major research interests include the study of deep-rooted conflict and its resolution; the exploration of conditions attracting parties to the negotiation table; the role of third parties in dispute resolution; and the testing of a variety of conflict intervention methods in a range of community, national, and international settings.

Outreach to the community is accomplished through the publication of books and articles, public lectures, conferences, and special briefings on the theory and practice of conflict resolution. As part of this effort, the Institute's Working and Occasional Papers offer both the public at large and professionals in the field access to critical thinking flowing from faculty, staff, and students at the Institute.

These papers are presented to stimulate critical consideration of important questions in the study of human conflict.

Foreword

One aspect of the major expansion of Institute resources and, hence, capabilities that took place in 1987 was the endowment of the Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Chair of Conflict Resolution by Edwin and Helen Lynch, long-time supporters of the conflict research program at George Mason University; and the appointment of Dr. James H. Laue as the first Lynch Professor. At the time of Jim Laue's appointment, it was also decided to mark the establishment of this, the very first chair in the country in Conflict Resolution, and to honor Edwin and Helen by holding a public, annual Lynch Lecture, which would provide an opportunity for a major figure in the field to report on progress in research and practice to a wider audience than was generally reached by academic talks and lectures held at universities.

Appropriately, President George W. Johnson wished to introduce the first speaker, and Jim Laue requested that he be allowed to deliver this very first Lynch Lecture, which he duly did on November 17, 1987, to a large, varied, and interested audience. Equally appropriately, Jim chose to deliver a sweeping overview of the field, its recent progress, its basic assumptions, and (most importantly) its practical applications in a variety of arenas in which damaging conflict occurs, from families to international regions, such as the Middle East.

The lecture, which the Institute has now produced in its Occasional Papers series, thus takes the form of an introduction to the field of conflict analysis and resolution, informed by practical lessons and examples from a long experience of conflict resolving in the field. Nobody was better qualified to deliver such a survey than Jim Laue. His experience of working with the Community Relations Service in the 1960s, his background as an academic sociologist, his wide and varied experience as a consultant, an intermediary, a campaigner for conflict "resolutionary" institutions (most notably the United States Peace Academy)—all this gave him a direct and personal knowledge of how the academic and the practical aspects of our field had developed over the previous twenty years, to the point at which the Institute (then the Center) for Conflict Analysis and Resolution stood ready to begin the first doctoral program in the field, and to expand the activities of its faculty and students as theorist-practitioners.

