



Thomas R. Wolanin (Age 74) Passed away on April 2, 2017, after a two-year battle with cancer.

Wolanin was born on December 1, 1942, in Detroit, Michigan. His grandparents were immigrants from Poland. His father, Chester Wolanin, was an electrician and his mother, Helen Wolanin (nee Helen Luszczyk) was a medical secretary. Both parents were high school graduates and expanded their skills in night school. Wolanin attended Our Lady Queen of Heaven Elementary School and Osborn High School (a public school), both in Detroit. With the assistance of a Katherine Tuck Scholarship (for Michigan students studying outside of the state), Wolanin attended Oberlin College. He graduated in 1965 Magna Cum Laude with Highest Honors in Government and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

A recipient of a Harvard Graduate Prize Fellowship and a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, Wolanin enrolled in the doctoral program at Harvard University and earned a Ph.D. in Political Science in 1972. Wolanin had three overlapping careers as a college faculty member and administrator, senior staffer in the Federal government, and consultant. He taught American politics and education policy at Oberlin College, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, George Washington University, and the Warsaw School of Social and Economic Studies (WSSE) (as a Fulbright Senior Specialist in Poland); and he was an administrator at New York University. He delivered guest lectures at more than 20 colleges and universities, including Jagiellonian University (Poland).

In his second career, Wolanin worked in the Federal Government including service in the U.S. Congress for 17 years in the offices of Congressman Lucien Nedzi (D-MI), Congressman Frank Thompson, Jr. (D-NJ), Congressman John Brademas (D, IN), Senator Fritz Hollings (D-SC), and for 15 of those years, Congressman William D. Ford (D-MI). Under Ford's leadership as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, Wolanin served as Staff Director and managed the reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act in 1980, 1986, and 1992. He also did staff work on the Higher Education Act reauthorizations of 1972 and 1976, the Middle Income Student Assistance Act (1978), the reauthorization of the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities Act (1980), and the Tech-Prep Education Act of 1990. In 1993, Wolanin was appointed by President Clinton as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs in the Department of Education under Secretary Richard W. Riley and served in that position for three years. He worked on the enactment of the Federal Direct Loan Program, GOALS 2000: Educate America

Act, the Improving America's Schools Act (reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act), and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

In his third career, Wolanin worked for a decade as a consultant (Senior Associate) through the Institute for Higher Education Policy. Especially while working for Congress, Wolanin was known as a major architect of federal grant and loan programs that enable millions of Americans from low and middle income families to pursue postsecondary education. As the first in his family to attend college, Wolanin worked tirelessly to broaden educational opportunity by strengthening federal student aid programs and by expanding federal TRIO programs in order to promote greater college access and success of first-generation college students from low-income families. Wolanin traveled abroad extensively for both business and pleasure, and enjoyed every opportunity. He visited 42 countries, including such varied locations as Malta, Mozambique, Georgia, Cuba, and Kyrgyzstan. He made eight trips to Poland and always felt a connection to the country of his grandparents.

Throughout his careers, Wolanin published widely in scholarly, professional, and popular publications on American politics, education policy, and Poland. He authored or coauthored four books, eight monographs and more than 60 articles and reviews. His last book, *Polish Charity Labels and Placards, 1913 - 1924*, was completed in 2016. Wolanin was a member of the National Democratic Club, the Polonus Philatelic Society, and the Cosmos Club. He is survived by Donna Christian, his beloved wife and partner of more than a quarter century; two sons, Peter Wolanin and his wife, Karen Sisti of Princeton, NJ and Andrew Wolanin, his wife, Holly and their children, Olivia and Violet, all of Philadelphia, PA; and two brothers, James Wolanin of Daly City, CA and Mark Wolanin of Centreville, VA. His previous marriages to Barbara Boese Wolanin and Andrea Walker Bolling ended in divorce. Following the wishes of the deceased, no funeral service will be held. Memorial contributions may be made to the Council for Opportunity in Education (www.coenet.org/public_040617.shtml) to support the Thomas R. Wolanin Congressional Intern Program. for Opportunity in Education (www.coenet.org/public_040617.shtml) to support the Thomas R. Wolanin Congressional Intern Program.

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