



Judith Davis

# A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY ON JUDITH BLAKE'S PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND SCHOLARSHIP

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**KEY WORDS:** social demography, population policy, family size, fertility, women  
sociologists, pronatalist policies

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## ABSTRACT

Judith Blake was born and raised primarily in New York City; she received her BS degree magna cum laude from Columbia University in 1951 and her PhD in 1961. She had a remarkable and sustained record of scholarly contributions, which can be divided into five interrelated periods differentiated by a combination of substantive emphases, methodological approaches, and time periods. Blake was the founding Chair of the Group in Demography at the University of California, Berkeley, which became the first demography department in the United States. She subsequently was the first incumbent of the Fred N. Bixby Chair in Population Policy at the School of Public Health at the University of California, Los Angeles, with a joint appointment in sociology. Blake served on numerous university and professional committees and boards and was elected President of the Population Association of America in 1981, the association's fiftieth anniversary. At the time of her death (1993), Blake was Editor of the *Annual Review of Sociology*. Judith Blake was a dynamic and creative researcher and teacher who left a strong legacy in her research, the students she taught, and the friends and colleagues she influenced.

## INTRODUCTION

Wide-ranging intellectual rigor combined with passion, enthusiasm, and a concern with major contemporary problems characterized Judith Blake. It permeated her research, her teaching, her professional activities, and her interactions with colleagues. On May 4, 1989, Jean van der Tak interviewed Judith as a part of a series of interviews with past Presidents and Secretary-Treasurers of the Population Association of America. Jean observed that Judith's philosophy for research and writing craves "theoretical relevance and simplicity of conceptual framework.... [which] responds to lucid presentation of investigative problems"; Judith says it best:

I've always been interested in what I felt to be major problems and not really that interested in just descriptive stuff.... I ... wanted to deal with what I felt were some critical problems in the field .... And ... I wanted to present them clearly if I could, and in an interesting and very lively way, so that people would have access to them.

Also I always had as a goal that people should ... have as much enthusiasm about population as a field as I did. So I wanted to almost shake them and say, "You've got to realize that this can be very interesting and exciting and you should realize this deals with ... big problems, not just little mathematical sums or something. I want you to see that this is something that can be interesting and that you can get steamed up about." ... I would ... try to reach out and grab people and have them suddenly realize, "This is a very interesting thing." And when you read it, you say, "Gee, I didn't realize this, ... I suddenly see this a little differently from the way I did, and it's not that dull after all." (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 507)

Judith was never dull. The questions she asked were timely and controversial. The research she conducted was impeccable. The context within which she conducted her research and formulated her research questions was wide-ranging and as likely to draw on history and social anthropology as sociology, math, and economics. And her writing style was pertinent, lively, and accessible. But how and why did she get that way? Where did she get her enthusiasm and her seeming fearlessness in challenging established wisdom? We may never have a complete answer to that question, but after examining her research articles, the interview conducted by Jean van der Tak, the comments of her family, her colleagues, and her friends, I believe that Judith's unique ability both to see the "big picture" and to challenge current interpretations evolved—at least in part—from the unique circumstances of her childhood, the selection, timing, and location of her graduate work, and her experiences as a young wife and mother during a period when women were not readily welcomed into the ivy towers of academia. Rather than taking this as an excuse for failure or complaint, Judith viewed adversity as a challenge. When Judith came to a barrier in her personal life or her intellectual career, she confronted it head-on,

examined it from all conceivable angles, and sailed around it, over it, under it or through it, often redefining it in the process, not only for herself but for others. Judith was a master at breaking psychological set—that tendency that we all have to confront recurring situations with the same old bag of partially successful, but tired, solutions, rather than to consider new approaches that might ultimately be more successful.

In reviewing Judith's career I start with a brief biography of her life and then examine her research. Wherever possible I depend on Judith's own words and those of her colleagues and friends in describing who she was and what she thought.

## CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

Judith was born and raised primarily in New York City; she received her BS degree magna cum laude from Columbia University in 1951 and her PhD in 1961. But as her sister Valerie Oppenheimer points out, during Judith's childhood, it was hardly self-evident that she would go to college, let alone become a leading figure in American demography.

[Judith] came from a family background that was not at all conducive to major academic achievements. In the Great Depression, our father's firm was sort of smallish, and it was ruined, thereby dealing a mortal blow to an already shaky marriage, and while I was still an infant [having been born in England], my mother went back home with us to New York City, where we all crammed into our grandmother's small apartment. Our father remained in California, and neither of us saw him again till we were adults. Hence Judith and I grew up in a three-generation, all-female household, with our mother, grandmother, and maiden aunt, in a state that used to be called "genteel poverty." The adults in our family were all traditional middle-class women with quite modest educational attainments, although reared in a tradition that fostered an appreciation of literature, music, and the arts. None of them evidenced any intellectual leanings that I ever noticed. They believed that ideally young women should marry and be properly supported by their husbands. In fact, I always suspected that in their eyes, the main function of a man in this world was to support a wife in the style to which she aspired.

So how did such a family spawn two professionals? Well, among other things, events led to the recognition that for a variety of reasons, women might find themselves without male support. Here was a group of women, who through widowhood, divorce, and spinsterhood, had to support themselves but were ill-prepared to do so given their background. Hence, it was borne in on everyone that being able to paddle your own canoe, even if only temporarily, would have a decided advantage. However, I don't think any of the adults quite knew how to achieve this.

Consistent with her background, my aunt's approach to the problem was that Judith should have a career as an actress and model, supervised by her aunt, of course. And therefore, Judith was dragged around to one producer's office or another for years, depriving her of a normal adolescence. Although she eventually escaped from this grind, the advantages of some kind of career were brought home

to us. Since she was also very bright, Judith rapidly saw the role of education in accomplishing this. This led to going to Columbia University, where she eventually landed in sociology and then social demography.

However, considering our background, the transformation of a budding ingenue to a professor in social demography was nothing short of a miracle. Judith's pioneering trail and the immediacy of it provided by close association were extremely important in my own academic journey. Judith was the only one in the family that quite seemed to have a head on her shoulders, and always had quite definite career goals—albeit frequently changing ones, but whichever they were at the time, they were definite—that she was working very hard to achieve. She provided me with a constant cafeteria of options to sample. Hence, I aspired to read everything she said was good, and at least thought of trying out every possible career she was considering. The results were not always satisfactory, to be sure; I read many of the literary classics before I was old enough to understand them, because she was my big sister. But that was all right, it led me to discover the section of the local library on science. [When] I ran out of the Thomas Hardy, I got [to the science section]. I positively loathed acting, acting and the whole theater and TV scene; I hated modeling with a passion; and early on realized that a literary career was not for me. Finally, Judith hit the jackpot, from my perspective, at least. She became involved with social demography, a field which I, along with most people in those days, had never even heard of. She naturally recommended I look into it, she always recommended I look into everything she did, especially since demography, early on, provided good career options for women. There were already several eminent women demographers. This was not an unimportant consideration in those days .... Meanwhile, I was just finishing up a bachelor's in anthropology, but getting, I must say, dreadfully tired of the constant menu of village life it offered up. Gradually there had been building up in me a burning desire to be able to say something about a society or country as a whole, and to go beyond the rubric of culture. Judith's encouragement to explore demography, plus Kingsley Davis's book on the population of India and Pakistan, opened up an entirely new intellectual world to me. It is one I've been happily exploring ever since. So, coming from a family background where the sciences, social or natural, were part of the great unknown, Judith managed to carve herself a highly distinguished career, and by her pioneering efforts, also showed me the way to a field with intellectual rewards I treasure today. (Valerie Oppenheimer, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, 1993)

Judith's own description of how and why she selected social demography confirms, complements, and expands Valerie's observations.

I guess I was really looking for a sub-field of sociology that was empirical and very broad in its disciplinary scope, international, and that would have an influence on world affairs. I wasn't interested in voting and political participation, for example, which was the focus of most survey research at Columbia. This was Paul Lazarsfeld's focus, really his main interest. Although I was interested in the survey side, I wasn't interested in the voting side. And I wasn't a Marxist. There was a very strong, very distinguished, Marxist tradition at Columbia, with Robert Lynd and Herbert Marcuse and all of that. So that was a whole contingent that was kind of ruled out for me.

So for a while, I was really at sea. Then, strangely enough, I was walking along

Amsterdam Avenue one day and met Alice Taylor, who became Alice Taylor Day, ultimately, but was then just plain Alice Taylor, and told her, "Alice, I'm just not quite focusing in this place and I don't know what to do." Alice was always a dear, sweet person and she said, "Oh, that's no problem; you ought to take a course in demography. I know you're going to be crazy about it; it's just for you." [Judith went straight to graduate school at Columbia after finishing her undergraduate degree.] I was a New Yorker and I really didn't know there was anyplace else; it never occurred to me to go elsewhere. Also I didn't have much money. And it wasn't so dumb, because I knew the territory there, and for me to have uprooted myself to go someplace else without any financial backing or anything would have been a little foolhardy. So I stayed.

One of the things that had happened was I was sort of burned out, because I had taken all these graduate courses for undergraduate credit and by the time I was a graduate student, there really wasn't much else to take. And I had kind of worked my way through a series of enthusiasms which I then worked my way out of, and I was just beginning to feel, "What am I doing here?"

Alice said, "The course is just starting up." So I registered. The course was being taught by Hope Eldridge, who was a wonderful person ....

I've asked myself this over time: What was it that just knocked me for a loop? I think partly it was there were so many data. Now this may not sound important to you, but at the time, generating information was not easy. Sociology had just survived the throes—and was really in the throes—of community studies, studies that were mainly asking how many social classes could you find in a community, and some people found six and some found eight and some found twelve. But fundamentally, generating data, information about whether things were true or not true and whatever, wasn't easy. It was really a tough proposition to process those data as well.

So here was a field where you were awash in data; the stuff was just pouring out. That was wonderful. In the course, you were set to work on lab problems where you were actually looking at census data and manipulating them and there they were for any country you could think of. It was just terrific! Also, you could do comparative analyses and I liked that. I liked the idea of looking at a lot of different countries and comparing.

And surveys also seemed to me to be very applicable. As I started thinking about demographic issues, I got beyond the data side very rapidly and started thinking about why things were happening. I started to realize that the training I'd had in surveys should be very applicable, because what people were asking were analytical questions and with censuses it was hard to zero in on those. By and large, censuses were legal documents and you were very limited as to what you could ask, and vital registration data were the same. So I moved rapidly in my own mind from thinking, "This is a field where you're awash in data," to thinking, "This is a field where you're awash in data, but none of them are quite right for what you're asking, what you're interested in." They were suggestive and you would do these analyses, and then you would be left with kind of an empty pot, because the real questions you wanted to ask you didn't have any control over.

So at the time, I thought that doing surveys was a way of amalgamating training I had had with what I conceived to be the new demography. And I got really enthusiastic about that. So I stayed in the course for the semester and was making very rapid strides and thinking about what I would be interested in doing. Then

Kingsley came back from Africa and gave the second half of the course. He was full of all of the international comparative stuff and what had been going on in Africa. That just blew me away, I mean the fact that you would be going to the Dark continent and seeing all these things; it was a period of enormous change and colonial problems and so forth.

I got a job at the Bureau for Applied Social Research, which was run by Lazarsfeld and Kingsley and Robert Merton and that crowd. I got a job on the cities' project, which was being done for the Air Force. This project was looking at census data on cities, aggregate data. It didn't take me long to realize that I didn't like dealing solely with very aggregated data. Then I thought, "Oh dear, what am I doing in demography, because demography is mainly aggregated data?" and I was beginning to worry again that perhaps I was in the wrong spot.

Then this Jamaica project came along. The Conservation Foundation funded it and they were interested in the birth rate and family structure and so forth in Jamaica. I just flipped out; I thought this was a terrific idea. Actually, it ended up being the third survey of the topic in a developing country. The first had been Paul Hatt's in Puerto Rico and the second was the one Joe Stycos was doing in Puerto Rico; Joe Stycos had worked with Hatt. Joe was going to be the project leader and I was going to be his sidekick and we were going to go down and do this project in Jamaica. You have to realize we weren't very old; maybe Joe was 27 and I was 26, something like that. (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, pp. 499–500)

Judith's reminiscences about her graduate education and her introduction to demography set the stage for many of the themes that later would be developed in her research and teaching. Before selecting demography as an area of concentration, Judith already had completed most of the available coursework in the department, which included exposure to some of the major sociological theorists and methodologists of the period. The study on cities, referenced above, resulted in Judith's first publication, a monograph for the Air Force (Foley et al 1953). The Jamaican study formed the basis of her dissertation, which resulted in the sole-authored book *Family Structure in Jamaica: The Social Context of Reproduction* (1961). One of a series of classic studies conducted by demographers during the 1950s, Judith's Jamaican research was one of the first to emphasize the social structural context in which fertility occurs—but let Judith describe it in her own words:

We went ... to Jamaica and found ... a not overly hospitable environment, which was mainly dominated by anthropologists, who felt that doing a survey in Jamaica was about as loony as you could get .... We didn't pay too much attention to this. Joe is an incredible field person .... And we had the 1953 census we could use as a sampling frame .... So we went out and got ourselves a sample and did all the right things. We had our schedule ready and we went to the Census Bureau and other agencies to get trained interviewers, whom Joe trained some more, with great skill, and went into the field and did the survey.

Those surveys—the Hatt, the Stycos and Hill and Back, and the Jamaican studies—I think really laid the groundwork for people no longer thinking it was loony to do surveys in these countries .... which were much less interested in the causes of fertility behavior, which was our focus, and much more sort of descrip-

tive knowledge—attitudes and practice (of birth control) types of instruments. [We looked at socioeconomic background], family structure background and incentives and disincentives—what we considered the big questions ... (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 500)

## RESEARCH CAREER

Judith Blake had a remarkable and sustained record of scholarly contributions, which can be divided into five interrelated periods differentiated by a combination of substantive emphases, methodological approaches, and time periods. Her early career was characterized by research that was heavily theoretical in orientation, with most of the articles addressing major policy issues and the future of social demography. Much of her research adopted a historical perspective and, with the exception of the Jamaican study, did not involve data collection or analysis. When data were collected and analyzed, the methodology used combined social anthropology with survey research techniques. The methodology of Judith's later research combined secondary analysis of existent data sets and data obtained from questions commissioned by Judith as part of ongoing national surveys such as the Gallup Poll. It was in the design and implementation of these later studies that Judith hit her stride as a social demographer who was frequently ahead of her time and who rarely accepted popular or conveniently available explanations of population trends and processes.

### *Early Research, 1951–1964*

The Jamaican study (Stycos & Blake 1954, Blake 1955, Blake 1961) had as one of its goals explaining why Jamaica's birth rate was lower than Puerto Rico's (40 vs. 33) given the greater availability of family planning clinics in Puerto Rico. Data were collected through 100 detailed and highly qualitative interviews with females and about 50 interviews with males selected to represent lower income families. The primary objective was to add to a growing body of scientific knowledge concerning institutional factors and concomitant attitudes relating to fertility in different cultures.... It is therefore in the study of family relationships and the attitudes which arise in and lend support to these relationships that one must begin (Stycos & Blake 1954, p. 349). Judith and her colleagues found that:

This emphasis on biological paternity, a recurrent theme in the spontaneous replies of our respondents, was not anticipated by the investigators .... We assumed instead that the pater (the sociological father) would be emphasized as it is in many cultures where plural mating and/or matrilineal descent are the norm. In addition, we did not expect that the motivation of the woman would be so explicitly centered on meeting the desires of the man, that the male's desires would be so dominant. (Blake 1955, p. 32)



Judith's important research contributions predated the completion of the Jamaican study, which also served as her dissertation. In 1956, she wrote (with Kingsley Davis) "Social Structure and Fertility: An Analytic Framework," which provided a framework within which much of the social demographic research on fertility continues to this day:

The present paper represents an attempt to set forth and utilize an analytical framework for the comparative sociology of fertility. It first presents a classification of the intermediate variables through which any social factors influencing the level of fertility must operate. It next tries to show, in broad outline, how some types and elements of social organization, acting through these variables, appear to enhance or depress societal fertility. Our hope is that as more sociological and demographic information becomes available, the theories advanced can be refined further and tested empirically. (Davis & Blake 1956, p. 211)

The paper was originally presented in a session on "Foreign Studies" at the 1955 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA). This was only the second PAA meeting that Judith attended. When asked by Jean van der Tak how people reacted at the time, Judith said:

There was a big reaction all right. Some of it was very controversial ... But when the paper finally came out, it caught on very rapidly, because it solved a very basic problem of how to look at things .... (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 513)

Although Judith appreciated the impact that this classic paper had on social demography, she was not sure by 1989 that the original ideas were being applied in the ways intended by the authors. Judith was particularly concerned with the way in which the analytical framework had been applied to the World Fertility Surveys (WFS).

The whole point of the article was to say, "If you want to look at sociocultural influences on fertility, then you have to be aware of what they operate through and that these are the variables they operate through." ... [N]obody would ... have accused us of ... just look[ing] at those variables.

[But] it ends up that something like that provides people with a very mechanical way of looking at things. It's unfortunate .... I don't think they could have done it differently if they wanted to do something at that level. But it's a problem, because I don't think that survey has led to eye-popping theoretical results; we just have an enormous amount of data. (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 506)

Judith coauthored three other articles with Kingsley Davis during this period. The first paper represented Judith's first published analysis of the divergence between official statements on US contraceptive practices by the Catholic hierarchy and the attitudes and behaviors of Catholic laity (Davis & Blake 1960). This theme would be picked up repeatedly by Judith in later articles (e.g. Blake 1966, Blake 1984).

The second article (Blake & Davis 1963) outlined a research agenda for

social demography that largely operationalized the analytical framework proposed in the 1956 article. Research questions were posed in the areas of population size, migration, marriage and the family, reproduction, labor force, mortality, and population policy.

[P]opulation trends are the products of human behavior, and human behavior involves motivation....

It would appear then that attitudes and motives are not simply relevant to population study, but essential. They are essential to understanding the causation and possible modification of population trends, as well as to understanding the social and economic consequences of such trends. So long as population is studied apart from the analysis of goals and motives, it is studied inadequately. (Blake & Davis 1963, pp. 24–25)

The third article was a chapter on “Norms, Values and Sanctions” which appeared in REL Faris’s *Handbook of Modern Sociology* in 1964. Here the focus was less on social demography per se and more on a review of the pertinent sociological and anthropological literature on the topic. The authors did not, however, recoil from challenging the perspectives of the major sociological lions of the day, including Parsons, Wrong, Dahrendorf, and Mills. While Parsons-bashing was quite prevalent during this period, Davis & Blake’s critique of the conflict theorists was perhaps a first. They succinctly suggested that in their eagerness to critique the Parsons school, these writers confused norms with “good” and failed to realize that there are norms which support “bad” as well (Davis & Blake 1964, pp. 466–468).

### *Using Secondary Data to Address Major Contemporary Policy Questions, 1965–1970*

For all practical intents and purposes, the chapter in the Faris *Handbook* represents the last published collaboration between Kingsley Davis and Judith Blake. Starting with a publication in the *Journal of Chronic Diseases* in November 1965, Judith established a format for her articles that was largely followed in all of her research articles until her death, namely, to identify a contemporary population policy issue, review recent political statements and existent research pertinent to the questions raised, and utilize available secondary or national US data sets in examining the questions posed. Her findings frequently, if not always, challenged or contradicted conventional wisdom on the topic in question. From this time until her death she examined American attitudes toward abortion, childlessness, the status of women, federal family planning programs targeted to poor women and teenagers, the only child, and the impact of family size on the quality of children. In “Demographic Science and the Redirection of Population Policy,” Judith criticizes the two then-prevalent views that population increase will, on the one hand, decline only in the context of advanced economic and social development and, on the other hand,

decline solely in response to targeted education and communication about birth control (e.g. family planning). In this article, she used available data on European countries both to point out that much can be learned from a study of intended, expected, and completed fertility in European and European-frontier countries and to demonstrate that birth rates did *not* uniformly decline in Europe as a result of industrialization and urbanization but, rather, such declines often preceded the industrial revolution in a geographic region.

In this and succeeding articles, Judith repeatedly makes several points: First, that many explanations for population trends—particularly those that depend on a singular explanation—are far too simplistic and often ahistorical in their simplicity. Second, she argues persuasively for the relevance of studying the population experiences of developed nations in order to better understand and apply data to underdeveloped areas of the world. Third, she describes what can be learned from such studies. Fourth, she repeatedly demonstrates how pronatalist American society and institutions remained. And fifth, she sets the groundwork for what would become another series of classic articles in the field: namely, that economic theories provided insufficient explanations for population shifts.

In a series of articles (Blake 1966a,b), Judith repeatedly demonstrated that between 1930 and 1965 Americans had consistently intended to have 3–4 children *regardless of the number they actually had and regardless of the demographic subgroup with which they were affiliated!*

No major group in the population wants families small enough to bring about a cessation of population growth even if all other groups were to become similar to it. It is thus unrealistic to believe that any major social grouping constitutes a model for the small family ideal in the United States today. (Blake 1967b, p. 204)

While Catholics generally had larger completed families than did non-Catholics, their expectations regarding family size were more similar to those of non-Catholics than to those of the Catholic hierarchy. Contrary to the expectations of economists, family size did not vary directly with income but did vary inversely with education. Contrary to popular thought of the day (US Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Aid Expenditures 1965, National Academy of Science 1965, US Government Printing Office 1968), Judith succinctly demonstrated that there were not 5 million lower class women who were in need of family planning services! Rather there were perhaps 1.6 million women whose actual completed family size exceeded their desired family size (Blake & Das Gupta 1972).

Why then is it frequently assumed that there is a numerically important fertility “excess” among the grade-school-educated—an “excess” that more adequate birth-control information and distribution could eliminate? In part, this assumption may be due to a definition of “excess” fertility according to the ideals of the highly-educated, or it may reflect the feeling that fertility is excessive when it has

nuisance value for the society at large. Relatively large families among the grade-school educated exact public costs through welfare payments, special educational requirements, anti-poverty programmes, etc. The question arises, therefore, whether there is any important sub-group among the lower-educated that does reproduce significantly in excess of its ideals ... It is clear that the range of variation in family size within the grade-school group is far greater than the difference between this group as a whole and any other educational level. Those having no education and one to four years of grade school typically have families close to five children on the average .... [Available data suggest that some number of these women have more children than they desire.] Thus ... it may well be that these women constitute a genuine pocket of fertility excess .... Therefore, although these extremely deprived groups doubtless create a disproportionate share of social difficulty, they are not numerically significant enough to affect the overall grade-school average even if one allows that they are motivated to reduce their family size by one-half to one child on the average.

We must conclude, therefore, that the prospects for narrowing or reversing the inverse family-size differential by education do not seem auspicious if one is hoping to accomplish this end by influencing the behaviour of a major target group with relatively little education.... (Blake 1967a, pp. 173–174)

This series of articles culminated, at least in part, with what subsequently became a classic article, “Are Babies Consumer Durables? A Critique of the Economic Theory of Reproductive Motivation,” where Judith concluded:

Becker’s neglect of the social context of reproduction is most evident in four features of his analysis: the analogy of children with consumer durables; the concentration on the “consuming” as against the “producing” role of parents with respect to children; the misapprehension of child costs; and the failure to analyze the utilities involved in having children. (Blake 1968, p. 15)

Ron Lee describes the impact and importance of the article:

[L]ike her teaching, her research was very forceful, very active, penetrating, masterful. Just as the hour went by in no time at all when you were sitting in her class, so when you read an article of hers, well, it’s a very good read, it pulls you along. I remember in particular one article she wrote while I was a graduate student at Berkeley. It was an indignant reaction to work just beginning to be done in the economics of fertility, a paper by Gary Becker.... that article was very critical, in some ways a devastating attack on that approach. But I recently used this article again in a class—some 20 years since it was published—and I realized as I re-read it that, in fact, in her critique she had sketched out much of the research agenda that economic demographers and economists working on fertility followed in the last twenty years. Many of the things she discussed, like putting biology and sociology back into fertility theory and that babies couldn’t be purchased at the market have been accepted and studied. It was a very seminal piece and also very lively. (Ron Lee, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, June 6, 1993)

### *Attitudes Toward Abortion, 1970–1980*

Judith’s interest in understanding institutionalized pronatalist population policy and what differentiated persons who had large families from those who had small ones in combination with the ferment resulting from the advent of the

birth control pill and *Roe vs. Wade* resulted in Judith's taking a hard look at the American citizenry's attitudes toward abortion and the extent to which the perceptions of national "opinion leaders" failed to reflect those of the general population. The result was a series of articles during the 1970s (Blake 1969, 1971a,b, Blake 1972a, 1977a, 1979) that culminated in the realization that fundamentalist religious groups would ultimately mount a substantial backlash to *Roe vs. Wade*. Judith's early training at Columbia in survey research and questionnaire design was a pivotal part of the methodological expertise that she brought to bear on this topic during this period.

In Western countries as well as elsewhere the history of population policy has, with few exceptions, been a chronicle of government efforts to repress birth limitations and reward reproduction.... In most of the United States, state laws on abortion constitute some of the more repressive of our pronatalist policies .... What are the chances of fundamental changes in state laws to remove the legal ban on most kinds of abortion? ...

To answer these questions, I shall analyze the differences and changes in views on abortion among white Americans during the past decade. (Blake 1971a, p. 540)

Judith quickly found an answer to the question she posed.

Our examination in this article of the opinions of various groups in the population on the legalization of abortion contradicts the conclusions usually drawn by those who argue on a priori ideological grounds that certain groups *should* support legalized abortion in the United States. According to the latter, abortion should be supported most strongly by the less advantaged and by women. Clearly this is not the case. Legalized abortion is supported most strongly by the non-Catholic, male, well-educated "establishment." I have explained this finding in terms of the occupational and familial roles that such men play, in contrast with the roles performed by women in their own class, and by men and women in classes beneath them.

We may conclude, therefore, that changes in abortion laws, like most social changes, will not come about by agitation at the grass roots level, or by the activity of righteously indignant individuals who cannot currently circumvent existing statutes. Rather, it is to the educated and influential that we must look for effecting rapid legislative change in spite of conservative opinions among important sub-groups such as the lower classes and women.... (Blake 1971a, p. 548)

In 1971, Judith felt that a powerful elitist minority would be able to effect change in abortion policy at the national level in spite of the fact that 80% of the population disapproved of elective abortion, but by 1973 she was already beginning to sense that a backlash was inevitable. She based much of her reasoning on the realization that much of the rationale for believing that the American populace was in favor of abortion was based on answers to a single question commissioned as part of a Gallup Poll by Planned Parenthood:

As you may have heard, in the last few years a number of states have liberalized their abortion laws. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following

statement regarding abortion: The decision to have an abortion should be made solely by a woman and her doctor.

Judith argued that both the wording of the question and its existence as a single question resulted in biased data that failed to tap the full range of attitudes toward abortion (see Blake 1973). To demonstrate her point, she inserted a different question in the August 1972 Gallup survey: "Do you think it should be lawful for a woman to be able to get an abortion without her husband's consent?" Whereas 64% of the Gallup sample answered the first question affirmatively in June 1972, 67% answered the second question negatively. In September 1972, Judith inserted a second question: "Do you believe that there should be no legal restraints on getting an abortion—that is, if a woman wants one she need only consult her doctor, or do you believe that the law should specify what kinds of circumstances justify abortion?" Only 39% of the sample responded that there should be no legal restraints on abortion—quite a drop from the 67% cited by Pomeroy & Landman (1972)!

By 1976 Judith demonstrated that almost half the population favored a constitutional amendment that would prohibit abortions except when a pregnant woman's life was in danger (Blake 1977a) and warned that "If decisions (to legalize abortion) are to be fully implemented on a continuous basis, local organized efforts at collateral deterrence obviously will require equally organized vigilance by those favoring the Court's decisions" (Blake 1977b, p. 53). Judith published her last two papers on abortion in 1980 and 1981 (Blake & Del Pinal 1980a, 1981), leaving the area largely disenchanted. "I quit working on it, because I saw such disaster ahead and I didn't want to predict it anymore. I didn't want to be the person who was saying disaster is coming down the pike, because my pro-abortion predilection was obvious. I felt so overwhelmed by what I saw coming" (*Demographic Destinies*, p. 508).

### *The Pronatalist Stance of American Institutions and Policy, 1960–1993*

Judith's appreciation of the extent to which American society was pronatalist and her ability to verbalize this societal attitude succinctly and pointedly expanded throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike most other sociologists of the period, Judith was not afraid to challenge publicly some of the politically correct sacred cows of the period. One of the particular ironies that she recognized was the essentially pronatalist position of the women's movement. As only Judith could, she succinctly noted in an article on the population crisis

In all of our deliberations it is most important to remember that people do not have birthrates. They have children.... Individuals' willingness to bear children, to expend their human and material resources creating families, cannot be taken for granted. Rather childbearing and child rearing take place in an institutional

context that strongly influences people to do one set of things, reproduce, and not to do another set, activities that compete or conflict with reproduction ...

Perhaps most anachronistic is the pronatalism of our current women's liberation movement. It is often assumed that the present-day women's liberation movement is essentially antinatalist in ideology, and that its effect will be antinatalist as well. Actually, however, the main thrust of the movement is supportive of motherhood for all. [Instead] what is decried is the relative disadvantage that women experience because of childbearing and child rearing. In effect, women's liberation is concerned with lowering the exclusionary barriers for women in the labor force, opening up educational channels, elevating women's awareness of subtle forms of discrimination against them in the outside world, and supporting women's rights to have families as well. Rather than concerning itself with the atypical spinster or childless woman, the movement has gained popularity and a constituency through its recognition of the problems of women who have already made the choice to be mothers, and who are dissatisfied with their impaired occupational chances, or find motherhood less than they expected it to be and wish to switch gears .... Consequently, far from questioning the basic premise that all women should be mothers or, for that matter, that all men should be fathers, the women's liberation movement sets the goal of reproduction for all as a basic good. Childlessness is regarded as an inherent deprivation for all, rather than a socially induced deprivation for some.... [T]he women's liberation movement parts company with antinatalists by failing to recognize that it is not in society's interests to encourage the emergence of a family form in which neither parent is committed to parenthood.... (Blake 1972a, pp. 60, 65-66).

As part of a chapter in Parke & Westoff (Blake 1972b), Judith further developed this theme.

I believe it can be shown not only that there is, in American society, an absence of legitimate alternatives to sex roles having parenthood as a primacy focus, but that change is particularly difficult to effect because those individuals who might aspire to such alternatives are suppressed and neutralized. My thesis is that unless we realize that we have been locking pronatalism into both the structure of society and the structure of personality, the problem of fertility control will appear to be the reverse of what it actually is. We will continue to believe that our principal policy problem is one of instituting anti-natalist coercions instead of lifting pronatalist ones. We will see fertility reduction as involving more regimentation than presently exists, when, in fact, it should involve less, since individuals will no longer be universally constrained to forsake other possible interests and goals in order to devote themselves to the reproductive function. (Blake 1972b, p. 86).

### *Effects of Sibsize on Achievement and Personality*

Although it was often assumed, and Judith herself occasionally suggested, that her interest in the one-child family evolved out of the fact that she herself had a single biological child, in fact Judith's interest in the effect of sibsize on adult achievement and personality was a natural progression from her interest in attempting to understand what motivated people to have children at all and what predicted the number of children desired and had. Whereas her research

during the 1960s treated desired, expected, and actual family size as dependent variables, her research during the last fifteen years of her life examined family size as an independent variable or mediating variable between various socio-demographic characteristics of people and the characteristics of individuals. According to Jean van der Tak's interview with Judith:

[My] interest in the influence of family size on achievement was actually motivated much more by an interest in the effects of high fertility. And other people have just been so interested in the only child that this is all that I can ever somehow get anybody to ask the questions about .... (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 509).

An article published in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* in 1979 provides the first evidence that Judith was turning her attention to the no-child and one-child families.

As a proponent of the thesis that raising the costs of children, including opportunity costs, will lower fertility, I would join in the expectation that augmented labor-force participation [by women] will have this effect .... This investigation was conducted... to determine whether or not children are, indeed, regarded as *social investment goods* in American society, and whether or not people believe that other types of *consumption goods* are more attractive than children.... There is a high level of consensus that nonparenthood is not an advantaged status and, although offspring are not regarded as economic investments, they are viewed as being socially instrumental—not solely as consumption goods. (Blake 1979, pp. 246, 247, 255)

In describing the research of Blake & Del Pinal (1980a,) Hendershot & Placek (1980) noted that:

... [T]he major perceived costs of children are the direct costs of parents' time, money, and effort; the major perceived benefits of children are as a social investment—giving their parents a more recognized and secure social role—and the intrinsic rewards of interacting directly with children. Although nonparents saw fewer benefits and more costs than parents, they did not give strong support to childlessness—a majority of nonparents thought the benefits of children were equal to or greater than their costs. Thus, even to the limited extent that it exists in America today, the preference for childlessness does not appear rooted in strong antinatalist sentiment. (Hendershot & Placek 1980, p. 235)

Blake & Del Pinal conclude that "... people are most likely to see reproduction as being socially instrumental when their alternative means for achieving social goals are the most limited. (Blake & Del Pinal 1980b, p. 249)

Starting in 1985, Judith's research focused almost exclusively on the effects of sibsize, with the various analyses reported in articles providing the background and preliminary work for what eventually became only her second book, *Family Size and Achievement* (1989b) or its sequelae (Blake 1981a, 1985, 1986, 1989a, 1991).

Judith's first research in this area built on the work of William Sewell and



colleagues, focusing in specific on how sibsize mediated the effect that father's education had on son's schooling (Blake 1985, 1986). Using a series of national data sets, she went on to expand her analyses to look at variables such as verbal and cognitive ability, at socio-demographically described subgroups, and at women. In all instances, Judith found that children from small families fared better on all measures considered. The single consistently occurring confounding variable was the fact that children with no siblings had a higher likelihood that their parents would divorce, and the experience of being raised in such a family tended to offset the relative advantage of being a single child.

Judith's last research, which postdated *Family Size and Achievement*, conducted under grants from the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Mental Health, examined how sibsize influenced personality characteristics. Contrary to conventional expectations Judith found that:

... [The] number of siblings is not strongly related to sociability even among men, and it is not at all related among women.... The definitions of need for affiliation and sociability ... embody extremely attractive characteristics, among them warmth, love, cooperation, friendliness, and reciprocity. We would all like to know what makes people sociable. Except for gender effects, we may never find out, but at least there is some value in knowing that lack of sociability does not appear to be the price exacted for the intellectual advantages of small families. (Blake et al 1991, p. 280)

Although it is technically incorrect to consider *Family Size and Achievement* the culmination of Judith's career as a researcher, many of the questions addressed were originally expressed in earlier articles. Certainly the book's themes continued to express Judith's concern with what she perceived to be a strongly pronatalist society in which successful realization of zero population growth would be far more complex and difficult than originally thought. Whether it be abortion or the institutionalization of small or no-child families, these analyses and Judith's presentation of these analyses continued to point out that child-bearing decisions are made within a web of familial relationships and motivations within a societal and institutional culture. The ramifications of these decisions have relevance for both the individual and the society.

*Family Size and Achievement* was awarded the William J. Goode Award by the American Sociological Association in 1990.

## CAREER POSITIONS

Despite her extensive early research accomplishments, like many women of her generation, Judith Blake experienced the nepotism common to academic institutions when she first moved to Berkeley in 1955. Because her then-husband, Kingsley Davis, was on the faculty of the University of California, Berkeley, Judith took a series of positions as Lecturer, first for the School of

Nursing at the University of California, San Francisco (1957–1959) and later for the Departments of Sociology (1957) and Speech (1961–1962) at UC Berkeley. Judith herself described this period of her life in her interview with Jean van der Tak.

It changed my life a lot to move to Berkeley.... [I] went into a situation at Berkeley that was very alien for me ... not only because it was sort of a suburb [of San Francisco], but the university itself was ... very chauvinist[ic]; there were practically no women on the faculty and one had the feeling that they didn't want any either.... The chairman of the political science department said that a woman would never get a job on his faculty as long as he was chair. People didn't mind saying things like that. [I] felt [I was] totally out of the scholarly community, because I was no longer a student ... and I wasn't anything else ....

I felt it was to my advantage to take lectureships wherever I could so I could get teaching experience and say I had some teaching. I didn't want this long hiatus to develop in my career while I was doing nothing but writing my dissertation. I was very worried about that. I had to have faith that there was going to be a future, which took a lot of faith in the 1950s, because it was not the time when women were doing this sort of thing. I kept saying to myself, "Just take it a step at a time and if somebody offers you a lectureship or this or that, take it. Then take the next step." It wasn't one of these things where you felt, "There's a career out here for me somewhere." You just felt you were going to have to see how it worked out and hope that things would improve.

That's not such a bad philosophy, actually, because life is incremental and I took those jobs and got some experience. I'm sure I was dreadful to begin with and those poor nurses [at the School of Nursing, University of California at San Francisco] probably suffered through quite a few years of boring teaching. But I would have had to do that somewhere. They seemed very appreciative, though. So anytime I got a chance to do something like this I took it, and I gradually got to be, I think, probably a much better lecturer. (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, pp. 500–501)

### *Graduate Program in Demography*

In 1962 Judith was appointed as an Acting Assistant Professor of Demography in the University of California at Berkeley's School of Public Health, where she quickly advanced to the rank of Professor. A condition of her initial appointment was to develop a program in demography, and in 1965 Judith became the founding Chair of the Group in Demography and a Professor in the subsequently formed Department of Demography, the first such department in the United States. Between 1967 and 1971, a substantial number of the demographers currently working in the United States and abroad were trained in the Department, largely through Judith's efforts. The Department was unable to survive the student uprisings of the early 1970s but was re-established in the late 1970s. Judith described this period in her interview with Jean van der Tak.

...Jacob Yerushalmy in the School of Public Health was very interested in demography. He felt that something should be done at Berkeley in demography. So

he talked to Kingsley about it and then they talked to me about it. I thought that was fantastic. Again, I figured you take it one step at a time. Yerushalmy gave me a job and it was to try to start a group, which was the vehicle that Berkeley had at the time for establishing academic programs. The idea was that you would bring people together from all kinds of departments who had genuine jobs in those departments but who were interested in a sub-field like this one and they would form a group and put a curriculum together and get a degree program started. So that eventually was what I started working on.

We got [the Group in Demography] established [in 1965] and then it was clear that we didn't have any say over people's time or anything. I mean, we were accepting [graduate] students, but you get students and then all of sudden you realize that when people want to go on sabbatical or something like that, they just go and you're not able to say, "Well, this is not a convenient time for us this year. We're accepting x number of students, something has to be done with them, there have to be courses." ... So it wasn't long before it was clear that this was going to be an economically non-viable situation. And it was pretty scary because we had students on deck but you couldn't see faculty on deck, at least on a continuous basis. So we went to [Chancellor] Roger Heyns and he said, "Well, there's really nothing else you can do but form a department." ...

So the department got established [in 1967] ... with three faculty positions and never had more. I was sort of beating the bushes, raising money, all the time .... I could keep it patched together on ... [extramural] money, but it was wild, because we kept getting all these students, large numbers of students, and with the doctoral program we had to keep trying to gin up these courses for them to take, people to supervise their dissertations, and one thing and another .... [W]e started an undergraduate set of courses .... They were very popular. This was the time 1965 to 70, of enormous concern for population and younger kids were all excited about this, so you'd have as many as 200 students in an undergraduate course. It was incredible. We even had an undergraduate major that we graduated some people in.

So it looked as if it was going to be a success—in part, I think, because of the great concern for population in the United States.

But, in time, there was an awful lot of political activity on the Berkeley campus, and by the 1970 cohort, I guess, we had many students who were not only interested in population but were very political. They were very concerned about Vietnam—rightly so, of course. We became—it was a very little, obviously not very strong department—we became a big focal point for this activity .... and part of my problem was that I really felt that all one should be concerned about was demography in the university—I mean, that we shouldn't be political. This itself, I think, probably was a very political thing, in the sense of saying, "Well, I don't think a department should go political." But people who thought it should be political felt that I was being very difficult about this ....

Roger Heyns, who had been very supportive of us, left and Bowker came in as the new chancellor and he was importuned very strongly by the students .... So Bowker's feeling was, "Well, here's a set of faculty positions that I can get hold of and I have no commitment to demography; this wasn't my idea to create a department of demography." ... Meanwhile ... people left and really made it possible [for Bowker to close the department.] .... And Kingsley and I were left with a whole big bunch of students to see through dissertations. ... So I went through a period—and Kingsley went through a period—of getting these people

through their dissertations and out into the world. Which was a very strenuous period, and was, I felt, a very difficult way of going about things.... (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 501–502)

Judith described her view of what a department of demography should look like in an article in *Demography* in 1964 where she argued that demography “like other scientific disciplines... has an internal dynamic.... [Its] scope is influenced by the changing (in this case, growing) significance of its subject-matter for world affairs and by the augmented applicability of demographic knowledge and techniques.... As an essentially quantitative discipline, the study of population involves application of mathematics, probability theory and statistics... [with] important connections [to] biology, economics, geography, history, mathematics, statistics [and] sociology” (Blake 1964, p. 258). Judith felt strongly that it was restrictive for demography programs to be housed in other departments, including departments of sociology.

[O]ver the years, there have been ... groups [that] incorporated... usually about three [different disciplines]. I think it would be a good idea to have that kind of fermentation, because the field I don't think has ever really seen its whole development, especially along biological lines and lines of that sort. It's been very heavily a social science field. I think it would be a very good thing for the field to have more input from, for example .... the sociobiologists, who are out there doing their thing, which in some ways is very demographic .... [There is a] whole group of people who really would benefit—and we would benefit—from interaction. Now, I don't agree with them, but that's irrelevant. What's relevant is that they're really thinking very demographically, and it's almost as if they don't know it.

I think the field of demography is very broad. I never agreed at all with Keyfitz' notion that it was just a kind of simple-minded mathematics or something—something that was pretty low-level. I have always felt that it was a field that impinged upon so many areas and that one could, if one could ever realize this in training, have people who brought a demographic perspective to a lot of other fields, which would make people realize what a vital and fascinating perspective this is. I think this may yet happen as time goes by, because we're getting a lot more demographers—a lot of them trained by Berkeley, I'll have to say. We trained an *incredible* number of people in the amount of time we were there. (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 504)

In the early 1960s, when Judith both outlined and operationalized her ideas about what a program in demography should include and where it should be housed, there were no departments of demography and only the Universities of Chicago and Pennsylvania had a formal concentration in demography. Ron Lee describes what the program at Berkeley looked like from a student's perspective:

Back in the early 1960s, Judith singlehandedly created the program in demography at Berkeley. She invented it, she gave it a structure, she got outside funding for it, she directed it and led the program, and she taught in it. Perhaps it was the

first degree-granting program in demography in the country, certainly it was one of the very few, early programs. And over the years when she was there, it produced a very large generation of demographers contributing to society in many different ways .... I was a student there and I remember how the atmosphere in the program was charged with excitement, and crackling high spirits. There was a constant flow of visitors from throughout the United States and abroad giving seminars. The seminars were very lively affairs. (Ronald Lee, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, 1993)

Tom Espenshade went to Berkeley as a post-doc in August of 1970. He reminisces about his experiences at Berkeley under Judith's guidance.

I remember the first time I met Judith Blake. I was totally unprepared for the experience. Sam Preston, who was an Assistant Professor at the time in the Department of Demography, offered to introduce me to Judith, whose office was at the end of a long corridor in one of the temporary buildings on the Berkeley campus. As Sam and I walked down that corridor, I formed a mental picture of Judith. I had just come from graduate school at Princeton, and Judith Blake was already a legend. Her name was everywhere. My memory took me back to the days when I was a junior in college at the London School of Economics. One afternoon I heard a lecture from the distinguished British economist Joan Robinson. When Professor Robinson was introduced, what I saw was a woman in her late 60s or early 70s, plainly dressed in high black tie shoes, and white hair pulled back tightly into a bun. This, I thought, is what Judith Blake probably looked like as well. Sam Preston knocked on the last door on the left at the end of the corridor in building T-8, and when Judith opened it, I practically dislocated my jaw. The person standing in front of me was definitely not Joan Robinson, but rather a strikingly attractive woman in her early 40s, dressed in the latest fashion, with flaming reddish-blond hair, not a strand of which was out of place. That's when I learned to expect the unexpected from Judith Blake!

Judith gave me my first genuine teaching opportunity. It was during the spring semester of 1972 when I was asked to teach baby demography (Demography 100) at Berkeley. It was a wild experience, let me say. There were more than 100 students in the class, some of whom would bring their favorite pets to lecture, others of whom would sit in the back row and read the newspaper. One afternoon in the middle of class, three or four interlopers burst into the room and started pleading with my students to empty out into Sproul Plaza for some demonstration or other. Much to the students' credit (and I suppose partly to mine) the intruders were chased away with cries of "we're here to learn." Teaching that class proved to be a happy experience, and also a productive one because it produced at least two demographers—Greg Spencer and John McHenry.

Judith also gave me my first opportunity to present a paper at a professional meeting. It was the annual meetings of the Population Association of American held in either Montreal or Toronto in the spring of 1972. At the time, I was doing research on the cost of raising children, hadn't quite completed my dissertation, and was petrified at the prospect of delivering a paper in front of a large audience. I prepared solidly for three weeks, going over and over that talk. To this day, I can remember the opening line. The talk was very well received, and the positive feedback that Judith gave provided a big boost to my confidence. (Tom Espenshade, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, 1993)

*Fred N. Bixby Chair, University of California, Los Angeles*

Upon the Department of Demography's closure, Judith moved to the Graduate School of Public Policy at Berkeley, and in 1976 she went to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), School of Public Health as the Fred N. Bixby Chair in Population Policy, with a joint appointment in Sociology. As the first holder of the Fred N. Bixby Chair in Population Policy, Judith Blake was among the first, if not the first woman to hold an endowed Chair in the the University of California system and certainly on the Los Angeles campus. At UCLA Judith took responsibility for developing a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) program in population and family health. Until shortly before her retirement she chaired the doctoral admissions committee and supervised the doctoral roundtable. In this capacity she served as the primary mentor to the more than twenty doctoral students who started or completed the program during the 15 years she was on the faculty. She developed courses in population policy that were among the most rigorous and highly regarded of those available to students, many of whom sought her out during office hours for both academic and personal advice.

My own memories of Judith date from this period:

As a student under Kurt Back and Hal Winsborough, I was first introduced to Judith's early work when I was a graduate student, with particular emphasis on her research in Jamaica. However, since I did not pursue demography as an area of concentration, I never saw Judith in action until the Population Association meeting in Seattle in 1975. There, on the first evening of the meeting, I was in the hotel lobby when a group, possibly organized by Linda Moulton, with Judith in the vanguard, sailed into the lobby. I remember asking someone in the area who that was, and being told that it was Judith Blake. Later, during these same meetings, I attended a session for which Judith was the discussant. The session was held in the ballroom, and unlike many such sessions, attracted a large audience. The three presenters gave their papers which, as I recall, were in three quite different substantive areas. Judith then got up as discussant. She carefully examined each paper, using its own basic paradigm and assumptions. She suggested how the analysis might be extended, pointed out flaws in the logic underlying the study, examined the implications for policy and practice, and demonstrated how the papers complemented and contradicted each other. I went away mightily impressed. Judith Blake became my role model for being a discussant. It never occurred to me that she would become a colleague in the not-too-distant future.

When the Bixby foundation provided the School of Public Health with funds for an endowed chair, the late Leo Reeder was appointed to chair the search committee. As an assistant professor, I was not directly involved in the search. But I was, by accident, present when Judith's name was first suggested as a candidate. A group of us were in Leo's suite, and he was suggesting names of people who might be qualified for, and interested in, the Bixby Chair. Someone, possibly Leo himself, suggested the name of Kingsley Davis. Immediately, Leo said, "Well, why Kingsley? Why not Judith?" He immediately picked up the phone and called Berkeley. I don't remember if he actually talked to Judith at the

time, or left a message. But that was, I believe, the time and the way that Judith's name was entered into the search process. (Linda Bourque, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, June 6, 1994)

Judith's own memories of her appointment to the Bixby Chair were recorded in her interview with Jean van der Tak.

[I went over to the Graduate School of Public Policy at Berkeley] which turned into ... a five-year period which was a very happy one .... [I]t was my first really friendly, supportive environment in academic life ... [T]hen around 1976, the School of Public Health ... at UCLA got an endowment fund in population which was for a chair and they approached me. And it really didn't occur to me—I think I gave them six people's names, or something, and said these people would be good and that was it. I never thought about it.

Sometime in that period, Leo Reeder, who was a professor in the School of Public Health, called me ... and said, "Why are you not interested in this job." And I said, "Gee, I don't know." I never felt I had to account for why I wasn't interested in the job; it never occurred to me to leave Berkeley. I said, "I'm very happy where I am now." I just hadn't thought of moving. So he said, "It's a very advantaged situation. The faculty position is paid for out of state funds and the chair is just available to you as a yearly income to do research if you wish. This is a nice situation here. You should at least look into it. Why are you so rigid about this?"

So I began to say to myself, "Why am I so rigid about this?" So I [went to Los Angeles] and a great many of my Northern California prejudices were dissipated quite rapidly .... I found the Los Angeles area very attractive. Partly, I was a New Yorker and the proximity to this very interesting city, which was culturally sort of just bursting out all over, and the proximity to the open spaces, like the beach—40 miles of beach .... I was very impressed [with the university] as being in some ways in social and biological sciences a much more dynamic kind of place, a more interesting place to me, than Berkeley. And I felt less political, which was very appealing to me ....

So I began to see it in a different light and we began negotiations. Part of what I think appealed to me is that they were interested in population, whereas where I was, although they were interested in me and were interested a little bit in population, it was really sort of a concession ... having me in the School of Public Policy; population had never been one of the big things that they were interested in .... I guess I hadn't realized until I left [Berkeley], but it was almost as if something had stopped drilling and I suddenly realized, "There are other things and other places." ... So we negotiated a job here and I got a very substantial promotion and the chair and one thing and another.... So it has been a very happy situation for me. (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, pp. 502–503)

### *Professional Service*

Judith served on numerous university and professional committees and boards. She was elected President of the Population Association of America (PAA) in 1981, and at the time of her death was the Editor of the *Annual Review of Sociology*. The 1981 PAA meeting was the fiftieth anniversary of the Associ-

ation, and Judith organized a program that featured many of the important demographers of the twentieth century.

We wanted to have this be a real 50th anniversary, with people who younger people might not see again in a long time for a variety of reasons .... It was ... our way of saying thank you to them and making them feel that we appreciated all the things that they've done over the years .... It was ... a recognition of our forebears in the field. There was a lot of enthusiasm ... for doing it. It brought people ... together and the committee was full of beans about this and very helpful.

But it's an awful job, because, fundamentally, as you get down to the wire, you get to be the central nervous system for it. You can never delegate completely; ultimately, it's all got to come together. And as you get down to that point, it's murder—it really is. (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 516)

Judith chose to focus her presidential address on emerging research rather than summing up a trend of past research. The topic of her address "Family Size and the Quality of Children" became the basis of her book *Family Size and Achievement* (1981b, 1989b).

Some people gave presidential addresses which were very appealing and fun. But I felt that if it was the 50th anniversary, it shouldn't be something that was just topical or light-hearted. I felt it should be something that was serious, or was research, or whatever. And I had been thinking about this for long time, in part because it stemmed from all the arguments—with the Julian Simon argument—about population growth. I had been thinking how one could zero in on this in a way that would be more definitive.

I started working on this material and realized that it could be quite interesting. I thought, "Well, I am not going to stop this now in mid-stream and start on something else, and what would the something else be?" I didn't want to talk about abortion, because I didn't want it to be controversial that way; I didn't want it to be inflammatory. So this was the logical thing. It was also practical: I was working on it and I just couldn't switch horses at that point. (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 514)

## TEACHING

When Jean van der Tak asked Judith, "What accomplishments in your career have given you the most satisfaction?" Judith responded, "Oh, gosh, I don't know. I've gotten a lot of satisfaction out of teaching. I've greatly enjoyed teaching."

Jean went on to say:

Everybody I know who's studied with you thinks you're a dynamo. That was one expression that John Weeks used when we were talking about you at the recent PAA meeting. Alex von Cube, a good friend of mine at the Population Reference Bureau, said your classes were so stimulating, that occasionally there was controversy, lots of controversy. He said you could be hard on people, and sometimes you were a bit conservative, some of your students felt. (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 510)



At the memorial service for Judith Blake on June 6, 1993, Ron Lee, Tom Espenshade and Jennifer Frost all commented on Judith's teaching. Ron Lee stated:

I came to Berkeley as a graduate student in 1965. I'd been an undergraduate major in philosophy. I didn't really know much about what demography was about. I had a lot of reservations about entering a very new and a seemingly very strange program. I went into the first class, which was taught by Judith. The classroom was filled with tables as well as chairs. Every table had one of those massive old calculators, not little electronic things the size of credit cards like we have today; these were big! I thought, "God, I want to hear about ideas, theories; I don't want to do calculations," and so my concerns about demography as a field grew more intense. But then Judith started talking and teaching, and it was only a few minutes before I realized that I was in for a real intellectual treat. Judith's classes weren't really about numbers, they were about ideas and theories. The numbers were all entwined with the ideas, in supporting roles. And so Judith's teachings, as I said, really were about ideas and theories. Classes were intellectual, very rich. The theories and ideas for her were not like books on a shelf or like cans in a supermarket, sitting there in their positions. She didn't offer them to us like a grocer or a librarian, but instead her theories were very vivid, forceful things that were engaged in their own struggles, they had lives of their own. And her role as the teacher and our role as the students was not just to watch this struggle of ideas from the sidelines, but rather to get down there, in the pit and argue about them and take part in this intellectual combat that was going on, with Judith leading us through. Well this was a very exciting way to teach .... Certainly, she was the best teacher I ever had, in my graduate or undergraduate years, the most exciting, the most stimulating, and in many ways the deepest. (Ronald Lee, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, 1993)

Tom Espenshade commented on Judith's role as a teacher in professional settings outside the classroom.

An unexpected aspect of Judith Blake was that she had an Assistant Professor's outlook in a Full Professor's body, and by that I mean that she was always prepared; Judith didn't leave anything to chance. The first time I noticed this occurred sometime in the 1970s when my family and I were living in Tallahassee, Florida. Judith had been asked by the population center at Florida State University to come down and give a talk. Because we had known each other at Berkeley I invited her to stay with us. Early in the morning before the sun was even up, I walked past Judith's room and noticed the light coming out from under the door. Several hours later, over breakfast, I commented on this, and Judith replied that she had gotten up early to prepare her talk. One might have expected seasoned pros to talk off the cuff, but not Judith.

A second example occurred when Judith was asked to be a discussant at the PAA meetings for a paper being presented by Paul Schultz. Schultz is an economist schooled in the latest econometric methods. Judith was not daunted by the task, and set about learning two-stage least squares and simultaneous equations models so she would have something intelligent to say. I was tremendously impressed. Judith never stopped learning, never stopped pushing herself to higher

and higher levels, and never stopped expecting anything less from those around her. (Tom Espenshade, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, 1993)

Jennifer Frost has similar memories of Judith as a classroom teacher and mentor.

In September 1981, I first walked into Judith Blake's office, a new masters student, assigned an advisor whom I knew relatively little about. Little did I suspect that over the next ten years, that office would become a second home, and the woman, who was so friendly and helpful on that first encounter, would become an inspiration, a mentor, and by far the most influential person in my college years, guiding me by example and by subtle prodding through the maze of academic, professional, and personal decisions which characterize graduate life. In time, as I became somewhat educated in the field of population-related issues, I realized that my teacher was no ordinary professor, but an academic giant, a consummate scholar, a true scientist. My recollections of Judith, like those of many here today, began as a student, and evolved as I came to know, trust, respect, and love this remarkable woman. As a student, I stood in awe of her abilities as a lecturer. If the future should ever find me at the head of a classroom, I know I have an exemplary model from which to draw motivation and guidance. Somehow, even the driest topics took on new meaning in her classroom. She conveyed such a sense of enthusiasm and excitement about the importance of studying population policy, demography, and the sociology of family behavior. Moreover, she taught us to challenge everything. The rhetoric of conservatives and liberals alike often passed before her scientific scrutiny and rarely escaped unscathed. Yet the Judith Blake which I remember most clearly is not the academic scholar or the animated lecturer but the warm, caring human being. A few weeks ago, I was speaking about Judith to one of the editors where I now work at the Alan Guttmacher Institute, and, with real reverence, he declared, "She was a real giant." My response was, "Yes, but even with such distinction she always had the time to give help and support to those of us who studied and worked with her and she always made us feel that our ideas and thoughts were important and worthy of consideration." "That," replied my coworker, "is rare indeed." As a research assistant and an advisee struggling to write a dissertation, I remember both the substantive advice and guidance which Judith dished out, as well as the humor and conversation which characterized her office. Life there was usually a lot of fun, and over the years she gave us encouragement, warmth, and ample suggestions for vacation getaways, movies, and good food. For me, and a relatively high proportion of the female doctoral students under her wing, the discussion invariably turned to the topics of childbearing, child care, and the joys and frustrations of motherhood. Unlike some in the academic world, Judith was also rare in her unequivocal support for those of us who chose to combine graduate studies with childbearing. "For a professional, career-minded young woman, there is no 'good' time to have a baby," she would say, "so one must just make the best of things as they occur." During the early stages of my dissertation, I also remember being impressed by her seemingly insatiable curiosity about the world and all the variety of people in it. When I chose to study culture and fertility in Kerala, she was undaunted. She requested that I provide her with a few references covering Kerala's history, culture, and social structure, and soon she was well versed in the peculiarities of that region, debating with me the relative importance of

corruption in the corporate matrilineal joint-family versus economic change as a stimulus to fertility change. As my research progressed and I began to prepare to orally communicate some of my findings, her advice over and over again was "Rehearse—you can never rehearse too many times." I'm afraid that I never left myself enough time to be as organized, as prepared, as rehearsed, as Judith always seemed to be. But the debt which I owe Judith is somehow deeper and more personal than that of a traditional student-teacher relationship. For some reason she had confidence in me, and her confidence helped me to believe in myself at a time when my own faith was waning. When, unexpectedly, my husband died, leaving me with an unfinished dissertation and an infant son, it would have been quite easy to give up on many of my goals. But Judith was there, providing emotional and financial support, and even without saying anything, I felt her confidence; for her there was no question that I would not only finish, but also excel in all I attempted. At that time, I might have been able to sacrifice my own expectations, but somehow I couldn't let go of the expectations which I knew she held for me. I remember a conversation which I had with Judith some weeks after my husband died, and while most of the words are a blur, one statement stands out in my mind: "Jennifer," she said, "now it's your turn to shine." In June of 1992, a year ago this month, Judith stood next to me and shook my hand as I received my doctorate. It was a shining occasion, and I knew then, as I know today, that much of what I had achieved, and much of what I will achieve, is due largely to the influence of Judith Blake on my life. Her memory will inspire and guide me as I accept new challenges and move on through life. (Jennifer Frost, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, 1993)

Judith herself said the following about her teaching:

I've never liked teaching huge amounts, because I like to prepare a lot, and I like to use teaching as a way of picking up on issues that I wouldn't ordinarily be starting to write about or do research on and thinking them through. So I've always used it as that kind of a vehicle, for getting into something that I was just starting to think about. It gave me an opportunity to do a lot of reading, a lot of thinking. It has fed into research—not on a day-to-day basis but more to say, "This is a way of beginning to think about something and get input from people and have them criticize you and get a lot of stuff going on something." It's been very creative for me for this reason, and I've enjoyed it enormously.

Interestingly enough, over the years I've seemed far less conservative to people, partly because they have gotten more conservative, I think. So that is rarely mentioned at this point in time, because people have changed their own views about a lot of things. That helped—not that I changed them, but the world has changed....

[W]hen I was coming along ... [being a woman] was a big disadvantage .... Nobody thought of you as being anybody and nobody ever thought of you for anything. When I looked and saw how young men were sort of mentored and coddled and taken under people's wings and pushed and so forth, I didn't feel that during my youth it was an advantage to be a woman at all, in academic life.

On the other hand, I have tried, I think, to make it an advantage for other women. I've felt very strongly about this. I'm not a rabid feminist in the sense that I've joined groups and things of this sort. But I have been very instrumental in pushing a lot of women along. And increasingly so, as opportunities are arising, I think I have helped a lot of people to get good jobs .... And helped them over

life-cycle events, like pregnancy, for example, which I think many males have always felt was "She got pregnant; that's the end of that." I have been very supportive of people who have been in this situation and made them feel that there's no reason at all why they can't continue, through their pregnancy, getting their dissertation done. (*Demographic Destinies*, 1991, p. 510)

It is well to note how Judith affected students who did not go on to become demographers. An anonymous student made the following observation in a 1983 teaching evaluation:

Dr. Blake has provided the most intellectually stimulating challenges in my graduate career. I marvel at the breadth of her knowledge outside demography, from Samuel Johnson to *Le Rouge et le Noire*, absolutely topnotch presentations and rigorous thinking.

## CONCLUSION

Judith Blake was a dynamic and creative researcher and teacher who, nonetheless, never underestimated the value of preparation. Whether presenting to a packed ballroom at the annual meetings of the Population Association of America, lecturing to a classroom of first-year masters students, or participating in a department meeting, she was a dramatic speaker and never dull. When Judith was on the program at the Population Association meetings, the sessions were often scheduled for the largest room available. "People jammed the room, standing out in the hall, and Judith would stand up and be sparkling and entertaining and enlightening and penetrating" (Ronald Lee, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, 1993).

Most of you are aware of her many accomplishments, her extensive writings in many areas.... Also, all of you knew the considerable energy and verve which she brought to everything she did. What is less well known, I think, since Judith, was a very private person, is that she achieved all this despite an adult life characterized by many severe illnesses. She had a bout with kidney cancer which started in her late teens, was not diagnosed and dealt with until her mid-20s. And then there was the onset in her late 20s of the serious lung disease from which she eventually succumbed. In fact, she had an episode where I understand the doctors told her that she probably could only expect to live ten more years, and she outlived them by over 30 years. Despite all this, she managed to build up a long and distinguished career, without most people knowing that she was ill until very recently. And in fact many people didn't even know that she was ill until she died. I hope that it's a sign of the tremendous willpower and true energy that she had despite all this. (Valerie Oppenheimer, *Memorial Service for Judith Blake*, 1993)

While Judith had little tolerance for fools, she was neither mean-spirited nor vindictive. She did expect those with whom she interacted to continually question, challenge, and stretch their intellectual abilities in the same way that

she did. She loved a good intellectual debate, but when she disagreed it was with the ideas expressed, not with the person who expressed the ideas. The force of her personality drew people to her; many stayed to learn from her, exchange ideas with her, and ultimately, to build upon what she gave them. She is sorely missed by her former colleagues and students, but she has left a strong legacy in her research, the students she taught, and the friends and colleagues she influenced.

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