

August 11, 1983

File
Pool

Professor Ithiel de Sola Pool
Director of the Research Program
on Communications Policy
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge MA 02139

Dear Ithiel:

Mitch shared your letter of July 27 with Merrill Panitt and me, and I want to share some comments in response.

I cannot agree that every project approved has been routine or unimaginative. But I agree with the basic thrust of your letter about "University of the Air" type projects. The idea burned itself out in the 60's, and it requires more flexibility and independence than the Project has had in the past to breathe new life into the concept.

I hope that the choice of a new director will provide an opportunity and impetus for innovation.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:ab

Harry Coles
CC: Maurice Mitchell
Merrill Panitt

Ithiel de Sola Pool, 66, Dies; Political Scientist at M.I.T.

By WALTER H. WAGGONER

Dr. Ithiel de Sola Pool, professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an authority on the social impact of computers and the mass media, died of cancer Sunday at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, Mass. He was 66 years old and lived in Cambridge.

Professor Pool was regarded as a pioneer in communications research and was one of the first social scientists to use computer models in analyzing political behavior.

Joining the M.I.T. faculty in 1953 as an associate professor of political science, he was a leader in the founding of the university's political science department and the interdisciplinary Research Program on Communications Policy there. He held the Ruth and Arthur Sloan professorship in political science at his death.

Paul E. Gray, the president of M.I.T., described Dr. Pool as "the leading figure in the development of political science at M.I.T. and an inspiring force in its growth as a field of study into a major department with an international reputation."

Wrote and Lectured Widely

Professor Pool wrote and lectured widely on such matters as the impact of computers on privacy, the effects of television on children and the free flow of communication between nations.

He was the author of, among other works, "American Business and Public Policy," which won the Woodrow Wilson Award for the best book in political science published in 1963, and "Candidates, Issues and Strategies," published in 1964, which discussed computer simulations of voting behavior in the Presidential campaign.

Professor Pool's "Handbook of Communication," published in 1973, is con-

sidered the standard reference work in the field of social communication.

Professor Pool continued to teach, lecture and write after his illness was diagnosed in 1980. Last year he published, in addition to 20 articles, two books: "Forecasting the Telephone," an analysis of predictions about the telephone between 1860 and 1940, and "Technologies of Freedom," a discussion of free speech in an electronic age. "Communications Flows: A Census in the United States and Japan," will be published this year.

Dr. Pool was a vigorous foe of restrictions on communication and research, and several years ago he led a fight against regulations designed to curb abuse of human beings in medical and social research by institutions receiving funds from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

"A university is a loose collection of independent scholars, not a staff of directed employees," he wrote in The New York Times on Dec. 16, 1979. "But H.E.W. proposes to hold funds for universities hostage to the actions of each university member. If universities are to be thus responsible for studies that occur on their premises, they must convert their students and faculty into disciplined agents, instead of what they always have been: independent thinkers guided by individual curiosity."

Professor Pool was born in New York City, the son of Rabbi David and Tamar de Sola Pool. He was educated at the University of Chicago, where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees, and, in 1952, his doctorate.

Professor Pool is survived by his wife, Dr. Jean Mackenzie Pool, and three sons, Jonathan of Seattle, Jeremy of Brookline, Mass., and Adam of New York City.

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