



## Paul Offner Lectures



The legacy of former Wisconsin State Senator Paul Offner is celebrated with a public lecture series sponsored by the La Follette School of Public Affairs and the Urban Institute. Speakers have backgrounds and careers that span government, research and education, just like that of Paul Offner.

At the time of his death on April 20, 2004, Offner was a consultant at the Urban Institute where he contributed to breakthrough research on poverty in America. He coauthored, with Harry Holzer and Peter Edelman, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* (Urban Institute Press 2006).

Prior to joining the Urban Institute in 2002, Offner was a research professor at the Institute for Health Care Research & Policy at Georgetown University. Earlier, he was the commissioner for the District of Columbia's Commission on Health Care Finance, overseeing the city's Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Programs.

He served as the chief health and welfare counselor for the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, responsible for health and welfare policy development, including Medicare, Medicaid, Aid to Families with Dependent Children and child welfare. During this time, he was a member of the White House Health Care Task Force and coordinator of welfare reform for the Clinton transition team. Offner was also a senior legislative assistant to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and deputy director for the Ohio Department of Human Services. While serving in Ohio state government, Offner administered the state's cash assistance and Medicaid programs.

Before joining the Ohio state government, Offner served in both houses of the Wisconsin Legislature. He represented the La Crosse area in the Wisconsin Senate from 1977 to 1984, in the Assembly from 1975 to 1977 and launched campaigns for lieutenant governor and the U.S. Congress. As a Wisconsin state senator, Offner was assistant majority leader, chaired the Joint Committee on Finance Subcommittee on Health and Social Services and authored laws that licensed health-maintenance and preferred-provider organizations, established competency testing in public schools and reformed the state's civil service system.

Offner grew up in Italy and earned a Ph.D. in economics from Princeton University. He also received a Master of Public Affairs degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of

Public and International Affairs at Princeton and a bachelor of arts degree, cum laude, from Amherst College. He authored numerous articles on health care, welfare and social policy published in national journals and was a frequent contributor to the op-ed page of *The Washington Post* and other major newspapers.

### **Offner Lecturers**

**2014:** Former Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson

**2012:** Former U.S. House Representative Steve Gunderson of Wisconsin

**2011:** Former U.S. House Representative David Obey of Wisconsin

**2010:** La Follette School alum John Norquist, president of Congress for the New Urbanism

**2008:** E.J. Dionne, *Washington Post* columnist

**2007:** Harry Holzer and Peter Edelman, co-authors of *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men*

For more information: [www.lafollette.wisc.edu/research-public-service/paul-offner-lectures](http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/research-public-service/paul-offner-lectures)