

## Joshua Fishman

a tribute from Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas

Joshua Fishman, **the scholar, the guru, the friend**, has had a decisive formative influence on our professional maturation, for which we are truly grateful.

As the founding father of the sociology of language, Joshua has set an impeccable example as a **scholar**, by his ceaseless search for more adequate theory and data for the analysis of complex social phenomena in an astonishing wealth of areas and publications.

As a role model, Joshua has not been a distant **guru**, but eminently accessible, supportive and visionary. One example: our 1994 book on *Linguistic Human Rights* is now widely considered a benchmark, but the professional gatekeepers of two centrally relevant British publishing houses rejected it for utterly spurious reasons (clearly it threatened the establishment), whereas Joshua immediately took it for publication in the *Contributions to the Sociology of Language* series. Another example: when one of us was bewailing the way our work was attacked and misrepresented, Joshua shrewdly observed that it is better to be demonised than ignored. This was not patronising: it represented astute awareness that critical or innovative scholarship will meet defensive resistance, and the search for truth(s), a better world, and improved ways of influencing the world is arduous. Destructive criticism can be ignored, whereas constructive critique is always welcome – our analyses have sometimes differed considerably from Joshua's – and contributes substantially to the learning process that his generosity has always fostered. Joshua has always written perceptive and forward-looking back cover texts for books by others, identifying and summarizing in one sentence the main thrust of the book. We have experienced several younger scholars, awed by this generosity, saying it was the most wonderful professional thing in their lives.

**Joshua and Gella**, the **friends** have together combined the professional, the personal and the spiritual – and the hospitable. We recall a Sabbath lunch, discussions during a drive to Jerusalem, a wonderful dinner for many of us friends, and joining Joshua in an after-breakfast constitutional morning sprint around the Stanford campus a decade or so ago – one which left us younger fry breathless. We trust that this awe-inspiring capacity of body, mind and spirit will continue for many years to enlighten our worlds.

**CONGRATULATIONS and THANKS! ONNEA ja KIITOS! GRATTIS och TACK! TILLYKKE og TAK! Robert and Tove**

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