



NEWS

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SAMUEL G. SAVA, NAESP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMERITUS, DIES AT AGE 77

Alexandria, VA—September 29, 2008—Executive Director Emeritus Dr. Samuel G. Sava, who led the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) from being a well-regarded national association to be the leading voice for pre-K-8 principals, died September 27 in Fairfax, Virginia. He was 77.

Sava, a Pennsylvania native, served as NAESP's fourth executive director from 1981 until his retirement in June 1999. He served as a key education advisor to several U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of Education. "NAESP plays an important role in national education policymaking and Sam Sava's many contributions to the organization and its mission were critical and significant," said former Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley. "He was passionate about stellar elementary and middle school leadership in order to improve teaching and learning for all students. During my eight years as Secretary of Education, he was always actively supportive of our positive and progressive agenda for public education."

Under Sava's leadership, NAESP flourished as its membership more than doubled, growing from 12,500 to 27,500. NAESP's current executive director, Gail Connelly, who worked closely with Sava for 15 years, called him a trailblazer for public education and pre-K-8 principals. "Sam Sava's visionary leadership and his uncompromising commitment to excellence lifted an entire profession to new heights," said Connelly. "He put the spotlight on the critical role of principals and worked hard for them to be more knowledgeable and better prepared, and in return more rewarded for providing the best possible education for all children."

In 1984, Sava orchestrated the financial resources to begin construction of NAESP's first headquarters building in Alexandria, Virginia, and in 1997 he secured ownership. The building bears his name in recognition of this milestone. Current NAESP President Nancy Davenport praises this effort. "Dr. Samuel Sava's powerful legacy will live on forever in NAESP's stately headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia," said Davenport. "This cornerstone of the Sam Sava legacy provides a solid foundation for our association to build upon for the future."

NAESP's many accomplishments during Sava's tenure include: Creation of the National Distinguished Principals program; development of *Standards for Quality Elementary and Middle Schools*, *Standards for Early Childhood Education*, *Standards for Quality School-Age Child Care*, and *Proficiencies for Principals*; enhancement of the award-winning *Principal* magazine and *Communicator* newsletter; launching of the American Student Council Association; and establishment of the NAESP Foundation.

Jill Eaton, President of NAESP at the time of Sava's retirement, joins thousands of educators across the country in mourning the loss of this extraordinary educational leader. "For me, and many other NAESP members, Sam was a model, a mentor, and a good friend whose wisdom intrigued us, his quiet manner calmed us, and his motivation inspired us," said Eaton. "His diligent efforts resulted in the expansion of NAESP programs and activities to support principals and increase learning opportunities for students."

Sava began his education career as an elementary school teacher in Farrell, Pennsylvania. He later held principalships in both Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Before joining NAESP, Sava worked in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, serving as executive officer for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, a program officer in the Division of Handicapped Children and Youth, director of personnel training, and director of elementary and secondary research in the U.S. Office of Education. In 1964, he earned a citation from President John F. Kennedy for the administration of federal education programs.

Sava left the Department of Education in 1967 to become vice president and executive director of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, in Dayton, Ohio, and then senior vice president for programs for the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation in Flint, Michigan.

Sava served in the U.S. Navy from 1955 through 1958, and then joined the Naval Reserve, retiring with a rank of naval Captain.

Sava received his bachelor's degree in education from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania, his master's degree in education from Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, and his doctorate in education from American University in Washington, D.C.

A lifelong member of the Greek Orthodox Church, Sava was a member of St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, D.C. He also was a member of numerous honorary societies, including Phi Delta Kappa, and was education chair of the Boy Scouts of America.

Sava is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; two children, Anna and George; and five grandchildren.

A viewing will be held on Tuesday, September 30, 5-9 p.m., with a prayer service at 8 p.m. at Joseph Gawler's Sons, 5130 Wisconsin Ave. NW (at Harrison Street), Washington, D.C. The funeral will be held on Wednesday, October 1 at noon at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Massachusetts Avenue & 36th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. Interment will occur on Friday, December 19, 2008, at 11 a.m., National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

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Established in 1921, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) serves 30,000 elementary and middle school principals in the United States, Canada, and overseas. NAESP leads in the advocacy and support for elementary and middle-level principals and other education leaders in their commitment to all children.