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Donald H. Riddle, 78; Led John Jay College

By **WILLIAM H. HONAN** OCT. 16, 1999

Donald H. Riddle, who as president of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice changed the institution's curriculum to produce "educated cops," died on Monday at an assisted-care center in Newtown, Pa. He was 78.

He had lived in Newtown and died after a long illness, said Richard H. Ward, a close friend and former colleague.

Before Dr. Riddle's presidency, from 1968 to 1975, law enforcement officers were commonly trained as gun-toting security men without much exposure to critical and analytical thinking. Dr. Riddle changed that at John Jay College (a branch of the City University of New York) by introducing required courses in language and the humanities.

"When people asked President Riddle how to educate the police, he famously replied, 'Like everybody else,' " said Gerald W. Lynch, the current president of John Jay College, who worked with Dr. Riddle.

During his tenure, Dr. Riddle also gained national attention when he stood up to J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, on a matter of academic freedom.

In October 1970, Dr. Riddle learned that 15 members of the student body had suddenly resigned. All were members of the F.B.I. on leave to study criminal justice at the college. One of the students showed him a form letter he and the others had received from F.B.I. headquarters in Washington instructing them to withdraw.

When Dr. Riddle called the New York office of the F.B.I. to seek an explanation, he later reported, he was told that Hoover had decided no agents would be permitted to attend John Jay College as long as Prof. Abraham S. Blumberg continued to teach at the institution.

Dr. Blumberg had voiced some fairly mild criticism of Hoover the previous July, saying that there was a "cult of personality" at the agency and that it had been "a bit slow in civil rights."

Word of Dr. Blumberg's remarks had reached Hoover.

Dr. Riddle recounted later: "They said they were not trying to force me to fire the professor, but they just wanted me to know Mr. Hoover's feelings. I told them the professor was staying."

Dr. Blumberg said the F.B.I.'s action had a "chilling effect on free discussion at the college."

Dr. Riddle later said: "It's terribly naive of the F.B.I. to think it can send their agents to any college in America and not find someone who is critical of the bureau."

It was not until after the death of Hoover, college officials say, that F.B.I. agents began appearing again in the student body.

Dr. Riddle had been in conflict with Hoover previously, when as dean of the faculty of John Jay he appointed Hans J. Morgenthau, the University of Chicago political scientist who was a leading critic of United States policy in Vietnam, to a new professorship.

At a meeting on Dec. 18, 1967, at which the New York City Board of Higher Education approved the Morgenthau appointment, the board also elevated Dr. Riddle to the post of acting president of the college to fill the vacancy created by the death of Leonard Reisman.

He became president of the college the next year and stayed until 1975, when he accepted the post of chancellor of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Dr. Riddle was born in Brooklyn and earned bachelor's and master's degrees and a doctorate from Princeton University. He taught at Princeton, Hamilton College and the Eagleton Institute of Politics before joining John Jay College as dean of the faculty in 1965.

He is survived by a daughter, Susan, of Trenton, and a sister, Betty Carhart of West Long Branch, N.J.

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