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In Memoriam Professor Matthew Melko (1930-2010)
Our Society’s Past President, 1983 to 1986

Professor Matthew F. Melko, age 80, a native of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, died peacefully at home in Dayton, Ohio, on Monday, August 9, 2010. He was Professor Emeritus of Wright State University, chair of the Sociology/Anthropology Department for six years, and Professor of Sociology for many years.

Dr. Melko was a graduate of Alfred University, and he earned Master Degrees from both the University of Chicago and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. His Ph.D. was earned at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Professor Melko authored and co-authored several books and articles on Peace, War and the Nature of Civilizations. He was a co-founder, active member, and president of the International Society for the Comparative Studies of Civilizations. He was a Korean War Veteran, having served as a Sergeant Major in the United States Army. He was a 30 year member of the Westminster Presbyterian Church and active on its Mission Committee. He was also active in the Dayton Urban Ministry, working out of its center in the Otterbein neighborhood of Dayton.

Survivors include his loving wife, Nelle; his daughter, Julie Melko, of Pahoa, Hawaii; his son, Peter Melko of Mason, Ohio; his daughter, Ellen Moore of Denver, Colorado; and four grandchildren: Gwen, James, Lauren Gray, and Ella Jane Matheo. A Memorial Service was held at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, August 17, 2010 at his beloved Westminster Presbyterian Church.

We lost the best known contemporary civilizationalist, mentor to many other would-be civilizationalists, a tireless researcher and great moving spirit behind our Society. It is very difficult to see our international conferences without Matt Melko smiling and always engaging in the search for new civilizations. He had earned degrees in sociology, political science, economics, and history, but if you asked him “who are you?” he proudly replied: “I am a civilizationalist.” He inspired by his answer many of us who call ourselves “civilizationalists.” This includes me and many others, who, having some degrees, do not know yet who we are.

Matt lived, simply, and quietly surrounded by his loving wife Nelle and his progeny. He also lived simply among the members of the Society, all of whom highly
respected him. I know there is not much one can say at a time like this, but we can take comfort in the knowledge that Matt had a full family and scholarly life and contributed to many of the successful lives of many of our leading scholars.

In his memory, the Society establishes the Matthew Melko Award for the best paper on the theory of civilization, to be presented at the ISCSC’s international conferences.

My sincere condolences are extended to the family and to the members of the Society.

Professor Andrew Targowski
President of the ISCSC and an admirer of the late Prof. Matthew Melko