



## **In Memoriam** **Juan A. Villamarin**

June 18, 2008--Juan A. Villamarin, 69, professor emeritus in the Department of Anthropology, died suddenly on June 17.

Prof. Villamarin was born in 1939 in Bogota, Colombia, where he grew up, the son of a cardiologist. He received his bachelor of science degree (1963) in geology from Louisiana State University and his master's degree (1965) and doctorate (1972) in anthropology from Brandeis University. His first job was as professor of anthropology at the University of the Andes in Bogota, Colombia, and he came to the University of Delaware in 1970. A faculty member in the Department of Anthropology and director of the Latin American Studies Program, he served as chairperson of the department for 25 years. Following early ethnographic fieldwork in the former Yugoslavia, he did field research on land tenure in Colombia and later he worked in archives in both Bogota and Seville. He had a lifelong close and productive collaboration with his wife, Judy Villamarin. They used both field and archival research to examine chiefdoms, land tenure, Indian labor and the effects of the Spanish conquest and colonization on South American cultures and published extensively on these topics.

Over the last two decades, Prof. Villamarin chose to work with under-represented students who needed his help. These were often, but not exclusively, Latin American students on campus and in the local community. Before and after his retirement in 2004, he was a mentor in the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program, forming close relationships with generations of students who called him *Papa Juan*. He had deep empathy for students who were new to the academic environment and worked to help them succeed at the University. He focused not only on their academic work, but also on their financial, personal and even legal concerns. Always available to students, he energetically shared with them his time and love of learning. He also worked hard over many years to increase the diversity of faculty and staff at the University. In 2004, he received the Louis Lorenzo Redding Diversity Award, which recognizes the promotion, enhancement and implementation of diversity at the University of Delaware.

Throughout his academic career and retirement, Prof. Villamarin maintained interests beyond the scope of his research and work with students. He continued his interest in geology developed during his undergraduate days by collecting minerals and fossils and he was an avid bibliophile.

The day before he died was a typical day for him--he met with McNair students, went to the gym and walked down Main Street.

He will be a lasting presence to those he loved and mentored, most especially his wife Judy, his daughter, Joann Villamarin, his grandchildren, Jasmine and Noah, and his son-in-law, Joe Cutter.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to a fund for the support of Latino students from Delaware who are now attending or who desire to attend the University. Please send contributions to Prof. Karen Rosenberg, Chair, Department of Anthropology, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716. Checks should be made payable to the University of Delaware.

A memorial service is being planned by his family and friends. Information will be provided soon.

