



Robert Sheehan
5th ACJS President
1967-1968

Robert Sheehan was born in 1930 in Natick, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston. Growing up during World War II, he attended Boston Latin School and Wellesley High School, graduating in 1948. He attended Tufts University earning both Bachelor and Master's degrees in Sociology. He then served as a special agent in the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps from 1955 to 1957, before joining the faculty at Michigan State University in the School of Police Administration and Public Safety.

Three years later, in 1960, he moved back to his native Boston, securing a position as Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Law Enforcement and Security at Northeastern University. He worked throughout the 1960s to make the study of policing a more academically rigorous discipline, and in 1966 was appointed Assistant Dean and director of the department. He also became involved in police consulting after moving to Boston, conducting more than two dozen reviews of police departments throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Sheehan was active in the International Association of Police Professors from its beginning and was elected as the 5th president in 1967. During his tenure as president, he tirelessly lobbied the Johnson Administration to include funding for police education and research in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. The result was the Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP), which provided police officers funding to obtain degrees in higher education in both policing and criminal justice, and the establishment of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (now NIJ), which funded academic research. It has been noted that while Sheehan was president of the IAPP, he was an outspoken critic of the FBI's failure to develop better measures of crime and the federal government's failure to adequately fund crime-related research, positions that won him some notoriety within the police professorship at the time, but the scorn of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

During his tenure as president of the IAPP, Sheehan also received word that he had obtained a Ford Foundation grant for \$97,000. The grant allowed him to establish the College of Criminal Justice at Northeastern, to which he was rightfully appointed its first Dean. Two of the first students in the program included Jack Greene, who would one day also serve as the Dean of the College at Northeastern, and Gary Cordner, who would go on to serve as the 36th president of ACJS. Sheehan and Cordner also authored a textbook together, *Introduction to Police Administration* with Addison Wesley (the same book is now in its 7th edition with Anderson).

Sheehan stepped down as Dean of the College, but continued to serve as a professor at Northeastern throughout the 1980s, and he always stayed in touch with his former students. In 1989, ACJS awarded him the Founder's Award. About that same time, however, he contracted cancer, and soon died on May 9, 1990, at the age of 59. He was survived by his wife Carol Lee and their four sons (all graduates of Northeastern University).

In 2001, then Dean Jack Greene, dedicated the *H. Robert Sheehan Memorial Seminar and Conference Room* and established a scholarship in the memory of his professor, friend, and mentor. As Cordner and Greene expressed, Sheehan's "moral and ethical side was also the strongest element of his teaching. While not eschewing facts and principles, Bob as a teacher sought to make students confront their values and prejudices." Cordner added, "he was our philosopher, guide, and friend."