



Gilbert Bruns
21st ACJS President
1983-1984

Gilbert Bruns was born on March 24, 1927, and grew up in New Underwood, South Dakota. Upon graduation from New Underwood High School at the tail end of World War II, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was selected for aviator school. Upon completion of the school in Pensacola, with the military drawdown, he was honorably discharged. He then attended the University of Virginia, and later transferred to South Dakota State University, in Brookings, South Dakota, graduating with both his B.A. and M.A. Interested in furthering his education he decided to enter graduate school in the Ed.D. program at South Dakota State University, graduating in 1951.

As he completed his Ed.D. at Arizona State Teacher's College, the college became the Arizona State College and then shortly after that Arizona State University. As the college moved away from just being a teacher's college, there was an expansion of programs, one of which was a law enforcement program. Bruns was interested in the program and, after applying for the position, he began teaching. The program moved from being focused on police officers in the 1960s and became the Center of Criminal Justice by the late 1960s, then the Department of Criminal Justice in the late 1970s.

In 1968, with the passage of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration began delivering grant money to colleges with criminal justice programs, and Bruns became actively involved in the various programs at Arizona State University. Bruns conducted applied research for the University, for he had participated in an evaluation of varying approaches to Freshmen orientation at Arizona State University. As a result of this study, which had used survey methodology, Bruns was asked to lead a grant project to assess the attitudes of criminal justice personnel in the state of Arizona regarding higher education. This study was published in 1974 by the Center of Criminal Justice.

It was during this time period that he joined the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and became an active member. He served on a number of committees, including in the early 1980s, the Standards Committee, serving as that committee's chair. Ever the realist, while others were advocating for the movement to accreditation, Bruns argued that the way it was being formulated it would never be cost effective and the Academy would lose money. As a result of this reality check, among other factors, accreditation was shelved.

Bruns impressed many with his quiet but forceful manner, and in 1983, was elected as the 21st President of ACSJ. During his tenure as President, Bruns continued to work toward the professionalization of academic criminal justice and enhancing the key missions of the Academy – the new journal and the annual meeting. The journal was, in fact, fast gaining academic legitimacy, and the conference in Chicago, Illinois was very successful.

After his tenure as President, Bruns remained active in ACJS throughout the 1980s, presenting papers, and occasionally publishing papers on policing in such journals as the *American Journal of Police*.

In 1989, Bruns retired from teaching and was given the title Professor Emeritus. He continued to live in Phoenix, Arizona, until his death on May 20, 2000.