

UC San Diego

CAMPUS NOTICE

**OFFICE OF THE DEAN –
DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIR –
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS**

September 29, 2008

ALL ACADEMICS AND STAFF AT UCSD

ALL STUDENTS AT UCSD

SUBJECT: Professor Emeritus Edward Klima, Linguistics Pioneer,
Dies at 77

Edward S. Klima, internationally recognized for his seminal contributions in linguistics and psycholinguistics, and a founder and professor emeritus in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, San Diego died Sept 25.

A pioneer in the field of modern linguistics and the recipient of numerous awards and honors, Klima helped establish the Linguistics department as one of the top-ranked in the country. His important work on the syntax of negative sentences stands as a classic in the field of theoretical linguistics, where he made a number of influential contributions. Klima then turned to the study of the biological foundations of language, which remained the focus of his work until his death. His early work in this area included important contributions in child language acquisition and in cross-species comparative research. With his wife and scientific partner, Ursula Bellugi, Klima was among the first to undertake the scientific study of signed languages, including American Sign Language. Their award-winning book, *The Signs of Language*, stands as one of the first and most important studies of the structure of ASL and played a major role in establishing the scientific importance of this new area of research. It was named Most Outstanding Book in the Behavioral Sciences in 1979. In 1993, Klima and Bellugi were awarded the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award by the American Psychological Association.

Ed Klima was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1931. After obtaining his baccalaureate at Dartmouth in 1953, he went on to postgraduate study at the University of Paris, University of Iceland, and Harvard University, where he obtained his Ph.D. in Linguistics in 1965. He joined the newly formed Department of Linguistics at UCSD in 1967, and played a major role in helping propel the department to a position of international prominence. He served as Chair of the department from 1971-1975 and was Director of the Center for Research in Language from 1975-1985. In 1992, Klima became Emeritus Professor and moved to The

Salk Institute, where he was Adjunct Professor and Associate Director of the Laboratory for Cognitive Neurosciences. Over the course of his career, Klima has held visiting positions at many prestigious institutions in this country and abroad.

Klima is survived by his wife, Ursula Bellugi, a world famous cognitive scientist, and their two sons, Rob and David and four grand-children. The family requests that memories and tributes be sent to klima-memorial@ling.ucsd.edu. A memorial event is being planned and will be announced at a later date. Ed will be missed by his many colleagues, students, and friends around the world.

Jeffrey L. Elman
Dean
Division of Social Sciences

John Moore
Chair
Department of Linguistics