Sidney (Sid) Saltzman passed away on September 23, 2020, at Kendal of Ithaca at age 94.

Born to immigrant parents and raised in Connecticut, Sid enlisted in the U.S. Navy during WWII after graduating from high school. As part of the U.S. Navy's V-12 college training program (designed to supplement the force of commissioned officers in the Navy during World War II), he earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Purdue University in 1946. After his service, he remained in the Naval Reserve while employed as an engineer by Combustion Engineering, Inc., in New York City and later as an industrial engineer by the Renwal toy company in Mineola, New York.

Sid married his beloved wife, Lory, in 1950. After completing a Master of Science degree in Industrial Engineering at Columbia University in 1951, he was recalled to Naval service, this time on a small minesweeper, the U.S.S. Tumult. A serious injury sustained aboard ship while operating in rough seas ended any thoughts of a Navy career. Sid then returned to his civilian career, working at Royal Typewriter Company. When Royal merged with McBee, he worked for Royal McBee in Port Chester, New York, developing software for Royal McBee's LGP-30, an early commercial computer, and he resumed studying at Columbia.

In 1958, Sid was offered an opportunity to teach at Cornell, so he, Lory, and their two young children moved to Ithaca, where he studied operations research, earning a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering in 1963. Sid sometimes claimed that this was unintentional - having tired of his job, he accepted a position as a teaching assistant at Cornell, only to learn on arrival that being a Ph.D. student was part of the deal.

Intentional or not, it turned out well. Sid remained at Cornell until his retirement. He joined Cornell's Industrial Engineering faculty after receiving his Ph.D., serving as an assistant professor until 1968 and as associate director of the Office of Computer Services from 1966 to 1968. As his research evolved toward economics, Sid found a better fit in Cornell's Department
of City and Regional Planning and moved to that department as an associate professor in 1968. He became a full professor in 1971, the year the department split into two. In 1974 Sid became chair of one of them: the Department of Policy Planning and Regional Analysis. He played a leading role in reunifying and reorganizing the two departments in 1976 to form the present Department of City and Regional Planning. He became chair of that department and remained in that position until 1983. He was named professor emeritus in 2009.

Sid is considered one of the pioneers of regional science, the quantitative analysis of regional economic and social systems. He was instrumental in creating Cornell's Graduate Field of Regional Science in 1972 and worked throughout his career to strengthen the program. His research interests focused on econometric modeling, economic development, and public policy analysis in both the United States and abroad. He published research on these and related topics in numerous scholarly journals, professional reports, and two books: The Future of Electrical Energy: A Regional Perspective of an Industry in Transition, with Richard E. Schuler (Praeger, 1986); and Methods of Interregional and Regional Analysis, with Matthew Drennan, Ronald E Miller, Iwan J. Azis, Walter Isard, and Erik Thorbecke (Routledge, 1998). The Sid Saltzman Papers are housed at the Cornell University Library Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections. A special session to memorialize Sid was held by his North American and international colleagues in Regional Science at the November 2020 North American Meetings of the Regional Science Association International in San Diego, California.

Sid was a lead developer of an econometric model for New York State and was recognized for his work forecasting energy policy impacts, using the New York State model to predict energy demand for the New York Power Authority. Forecasts made with the model successfully predicted that the demand for energy in the state would decrease, indicating that further construction of power plants was unnecessary. (A version of the model, developed by Sid and Dick Schuler, is still used by the Washington, D.C.-based NGO Resources for the Future to conduct research on energy demand.) Sid also spent a sabbatical modeling energy policy impacts as a Senior Research Fellow for Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., in Washington, D.C. His work in econometric and energy modeling was supported as well by the U.S. Department of Energy, National Consumer Law Center, New York State Public Service Commission, New York State Consumer Protection Board, and the New York State Energy Office. He taught, lectured, and consulted on managing regional finance and other matters internationally, including in Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, Russia, Puerto Rico, Italy, Trinidad, and England. He received additional funding from the National Science Foundation, NATO, the Fulbright-Hayes program, and the Department of Energy. Sid co-organized significant conferences and workshops on energy planning, large-scale social science models, regional science, and spatial econometrics, and was a regular contributor to the department's Seminar in Regional Science, Planning, and Policy Analysis.

Sid's teaching encompassed courses in quantitative methods and modeling, including statistics, econometrics, input-output analysis, social accounting matrix models, regional science, and quantitative public policy analysis. He loved working with students and helping them achieve their academic goals, and he enjoyed hearing from them as they established themselves after leaving Cornell. In discussing his teaching philosophy, Sid remarked, “I’ve focused my teaching and research on the application of quantitative methods for a variety of reasons. I believe all
students should develop a basic understanding of how to use various quantitative techniques not necessarily because they will use them in their own professional and research work but because they will need to protect themselves (and their clients) from the intentional and/or unintentional incorrect use of these techniques by others.”

A chair or member of many dissertation committees, Sid was particularly supportive of Ph.D. students. Cornell Professor Emeritus of Economics Erik Thorbecke recalls that, in admission-to-candidacy exams and dissertation defenses in which he was present, “Sid was invariably cool, calm and collected towards the students. Compared to other examiners, he was relatively quiet and gentle. His questions and interventions were always fair. At times, one got the impression that he was trying to help put students at ease and perhaps even become their advocate rather than their critic. He always carried himself with an inner humility that endeared him to students and colleagues.” Illinois Institute of Technology Social Science Professor Yuri Mansury recalls how Sid helped him as a Ph.D. student to find the confidence to become an independent researcher and instilled in him an appreciation that academics have a moral obligation to help the underprivileged. Professor Mansury notes that Sid’s deep sense of fairness led him to conduct research on such topics as gender wage inequality and the impacts of extreme weather events that affect people of low socioeconomic status disproportionately.

Iwan Azis, adjunct professor in Cornell’s Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management and former student and colleague of Sid, observed that Sid’s abiding sense of fairness made him a most valuable partner in a research team Professor Azis coordinated at the University of Indonesia to formulate policies for regional finance that would simultaneously meet the goals of fostering regional growth and reducing interregional inequality.

Sid’s devotion to education was not confined to Cornell. He was honored and exceptionally pleased to be appointed by Governor Mario Cuomo to serve on the Board of Trustees of Tompkins Cortland Community College. In all endeavors, Sid always hoped to improve the lives of others.

Sid loved people, both working with people and being with people. He supported and appreciated theater, music, and opera, taking in many summer performances at Glimmerglass. Always happy to meet new people and make new friends, he most enjoyed close relationships, celebrations, travels, and time spent with family, friends, and colleagues near and far. His warmth and kindness touched all who came in contact with him.

Upon learning of his passing, Technion-Israel Institute of Technology Professor Emeritus Daniel Shefer and his wife Elaine, whom Sid and Lori had graciously hosted during a sabbatical year at Cornell, remarked that Sid was “not only a credit to academia but to the human race.”

Written by Kieran Donaghy, Lori Saltzman, Erik Thorbecke, Yuri Mansury, Iwan Azis, and Daniel and Elaine Shefer