

COMMENTARY

# In Memory of PACE Faculty Director Christopher Edley, Jr. (1953–2024)

**AUTHOR**

[PACE](#) | Policy Analysis for California Education

**PUBLISHED:** May 10, 2024



All of us at Policy Analysis for California Education have been deeply saddened by the death of former PACE Faculty Director [Christopher Edley, Jr.](#), on Friday, May 10, 2024.

A prominent legal and public policy scholar with renowned good humor and clarity of thought, Professor Edley graduated from Swarthmore College, the Harvard School of Public Policy, and Harvard Law School, where he spent 23 years as a professor and cofounded the Harvard Civil Rights Project. He then served as dean of Berkeley Law from 2004 to 2013, where he was appointed Honorable William H. Orrick, Jr., Distinguished Professor of Law, in 2016.

Professor Edley held White House policy and budget positions under Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton as well as senior positions in five presidential campaigns: as policy director for Michael Dukakis (1988) and senior policy adviser for Al Gore (2000), Howard Dean (2004), Barack Obama (2008), and Hillary Clinton (2016). From 2011 to 2013, he cochaired the congressionally chartered National Commission on Education Equity and Excellence.

Professor Edley was a fellow or member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences; the National Academy of Public Administration; the Council on Foreign Relations; the American Law Institute; the Advisory Board of the Hamilton Project, the Brookings Institution; and the board of Inequality Media. He was also a National Associate of the National Research Council, the operating arm of the National Academies of Science, for which he chaired a committee to evaluate NAEP performance standards as well as a committee to design a national system of education equity indicators. He cofounded (with Ann O’Leary) and directed the Opportunity Institute (now under the leadership of Maria Echaveste), a nonprofit organization that promotes social equity through education using a cradle-to-career reach.

Professor Edley was an active member of the PACE faculty director team from 2018 to 2024, most recently representing the Berkeley School of Education as interim dean. He brought to PACE a sharp strategic vision and a laser focus on equity, and was a

joy to work with. He will be sorely missed.

*Biographical details are from the [Berkeley Law announcement](#) of Professor Edley's passing.*

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Stanford Graduate School of Education

520 Galvez Mall, Suite 444

Stanford, CA 94305

Phone: 650.576.8484

[edpolicyinca.org](http://edpolicyinca.org)

