

[Wiener, Ernst A.]

Linked to FBI Probe

Find Prof Dead in Car; Taught at P'burgh SUC

ROCHESTER (AP) — A college professor reportedly under investigation by the FBI was found dead today on a golf course in Genesee Valley Park.

Police said the body of Dr. Ernst Wiener, 41, an associate professor of sociology at the State University College at Brockport, formerly a professor at Plattsburgh SUC, was in a rented automobile. The windows were closed and a hose led from the exhaust pipe to the interior, they said.

Campus associates said Wiener suffered a nervous breakdown about a year ago and was estranged from his wife.

The FBI was linked to Brockport last month when several teacher groups claimed some of the college's faculty members had been recruited by the FBI and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to inform on their colleagues. A spokesman for one group asserted the agencies wanted reports on teachers' political opinions and on-campus political activities.

The allegation came after the Rev. John Messerschmidt, the college's Ecumenical chaplain, reported at a professors' association meeting a faculty member informed him he and four other teachers were in regular contact with the FBI and CIA.

The FBI and CIA denied this.

David S. Tillson, an anthropology professor, claimed Mr. Messerschmidt had warned against associations with Wiener because he reportedly was under investigation by the FBI. No reason was given.

The FBI declined comment today in the investigations report.

The Rev. Mr. Messerschmidt was unavailable for comment today.

Tillson said he twice asked Dr. Albert W. Brown, Brockport's president, to clear Wiener's name. Brown never replied to him, Tillson said.

Brown said in a statement today he regretted the death of Wiener, whom he described as an "inspiring teacher and friend to many students." He said Wiener had a record of hardship and illness.

Wiener, a native of Berlin, Germany, came to the U.S. in 1938. He taught at the State University College at Plattsburgh from 1951 to 1961 and joined the Brockport faculty in 1964.

He is survived by his wife, Johanna, and a son, Allen, 13.

Post-Standard, Syracuse NY, Sat. 22 Apr 1967

[Wiener, Ernst A.]

Brockport Professor Takes Own Life

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) — A college professor, reportedly the subject of an FBI investigation because of his civil rights and peace activities, took his own life after telling his lawyer by letter where his body would be found, officials say.

Workmen found the body Friday of Dr. Ernst Wiener, 41, and associate professor of sociology at the State University College at Brockport, in a rented automobile parked on the golf course in Genesee Valley Park.

A hose ran from the exhaust pipe to the interior of the car, whose windows were closed, police said. Medical Examiner Robert Greendyke ruled the death a suicide.

Wiener, a native of Berlin, Germany, had a history of illness and hardship, colleagues said. He suffered a nervous breakdown last year and was estranged from his wife and 13-year old son, they said.

Minutes before the body was discovered, the lawyer, Jack Kaman, received a letter from Wiener telling of his suicide plans. With the note, Kaman said, was a map on which the park was marked with an "X."

The note did not explain Wiener's motive for the suicide, Kaman said, but it specifically denied it was for personal reasons.

The Brockport campus has been the scene of charged by some faculty groups that a few teachers had been recruited by the FBI and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to report on the political views and activities of certain other teachers.

Both agencies have denied the charges.

Anthropology Prof. David S. Tillson said Friday that the Rev. John Messerschmidt, Brockport chaplain, had told a group of faculty members last month he had been cautioned by an FBI informer about associating with Wiener because of the reported investigation.

The chaplain would not identify the informer, Tillson said.

He described Wiener as the "politically most active" faculty member at Brockport, having participated in many civil rights activities and in demonstrations against American policy in Vietnam.

Wiener had taught at Brockport since 1964. From 1951 to 1961, he was on the faculty of the State University College at Plattsburgh.

Niagara Falls Gazette, Niagara Falls NY, Sat. 22 Apr 1967

[Wiener, Ernst A.]

Private Rite Held for Ernst Wiener

A private family service for Ernst A. Wiener, an associate professor at the State University College at Brockport, who took his life Friday, was held at a local funeral home yesterday.

Though a member of the first Universalist Church, 150 Clinton Ave. S., Wiener requested in a letter to the church officers that he did not wish for any formal service in his memory at the church, Rev. Dr. John W. Brigham, church minister, said yesterday.

Dr. Brigham said the body will be cremated and the ashes taken by Wiener's mother, Mrs. Dorothea Wiener, to Kew Gardens, L. I., where she lives.

Wiener, 41, of 1170 Genesee St., was an associate professor of sociology at Brockport, where he had been a central figure in the recent controversy over FBI "informers" on the campus.

Workers at Genesee Valley Park discovered his body in a rented car on the old golf course about 9:15 a.m. A hose connected the exhaust pipe to the inside of the car, and the engine was running.

A certificate of suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning was issued Friday by the county medical examiner's office.

Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester NY, Mon. 24 Apr 1967

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[Wiener, Ernst A.]

'Campus Spy' Case Revived

The State University College at Brockport is the lead case in a six-page article entitled "Spies on Campus" in the March issue of Playboy magazine.

First reported on Rochester a year ago, the Brockport matter involved the Federal Bureau of Investigation's recruitment and use of campus informers regarding political activity.

Dr. Ernst Wiener, a civil rights and peace advocate, was apparently the main target of the Brockport surveillance. The sociology professor committed suicide in April.

One of his letters said, "It is too painful to continue living in a world in which freedom is steadily being constricted." In his youth Dr. Wiener had escaped from Germany after the Nazis seized his father for participating in a demonstration years before.

The magazine devoted about one page to the Brockport incident, calling it "the exposure of an extensive network of FBI spying and political surveillance."

The article quotes an unnamed Brockport administrator and FBI informer as accusing Wiener of belonging to Communist-front organizations. The remark was made to Brockport's chaplain, Rev. John Messerschmidt, who disagreed and challenged the informer for proof.

The article quotes the chaplain's recollection of the informer's statement:

"Wouldn't you do this FBI work if your country requested it of you? How can you attack the FBI when it's only trying to protect you? ... This surveillance work is occurring on every campus in the country ... Those who are being watched shouldn't have anything to hide if what they are doing and saying is aboveboard."

The article lists examples of student, faculty and administration spying for the FBI and Central Intelligence Agency.

The schools include Farleigh Dickinson, Brigham Young University, Carlton College, Duke University, University of Texas, St. John's University, University of Illinois, University of Indiana, University of North Carolina, University of Kansas, Michigan State University and Ohio State University.

Eleven students testified they got \$45,000 from the FBI for informing about a youth organization four years ago.

Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester NY, Wed. 14 Feb 1968