

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

ERNEST R. HILGARD, PH.D.

(1904-2001)

The Stanford Psychology Department lost one of its more eloquent and renowned spokesmen with the death of Ernest R. Hilgard at his home in Palo Alto, California on October 22, 2001. Regarded by many as the Elder Statesman of American Psychology, Hilgard was 97 years old at his death from cardiopulmonary arrest.

Known as Jack to his many friends and colleagues, Hilgard enjoyed one of the longest and most productive careers in twentieth-century American psychology. As a teacher and writer of influential textbooks, as a scholar who synthesized and advanced important areas of research, as an administrator who played key roles in the development of Stanford's strong department, school, and university as well as in the restructuring and governance of his chosen discipline and profession, as someone who encouraged and promoted the study of Psychology's past, as a citizen who contributed ideas, time, and money to civic organizations and causes, and as a person known for his broad interests, consistent fairness, good humor, balanced objectivity, and deep love of family and friends, Jack Hilgard has left a profound and lasting impression upon the educational, scientific, professional, and social spheres in which he lived and worked.

Jack Hilgard was born July 25, 1904 and raised in Belleville, Illinois. In 1924 he earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He did his graduate work at Yale University, first with a year in the Divinity school studying social ethics, and the remainder in Yale's Psychology department. Hilgard received his doctoral degree in 1930 in experimental psychology. He taught and pursued research at Yale from 1930 to 1933, and then moved to Stanford University with a joint appointment in both Psychology and the School of education. He quickly rose through the academic ranks and by 1938 was a full professor. He spent the rest of his career at Stanford, except for an absence working for the government in Washington, D.C. during World War II.

Hilgard's early research throughout the 1930s was on basic conditioning phenomena. This work culminated with publication in 1940 of the text Conditioning and Learning co-authored with Donald Marquis. Like his later texts, it was immediately recognized as a classic treatise because it pulled together an active but disorganized area of research, establishing a more common vocabulary, defining a coherent set of issues, and giving clearer focus and direction to the field. In 1948, Hilgard published a second epochal-making textbook, *Theories of Learning*, which became and remained a standard reference for psychologists and their students well beyond its fifth and final edition in 1981. Gordon Bower, a Stanford colleague, was enlisted to co-author its last three revisions.

A third text that established Hilgard's reputation as a masterful integrator of psychological materials was his Introduction to Psychology, first published in 1953. During the following 48 years it has gone through 12 revisions and continues to portray the central ideas that define the complex discipline of psychology. To keep current and topical, in later editions Hilgard enlisted the help of several younger co-authors. Throughout the 1960's and '70's, Introduction to Psychology was the dominant textbook in its field, rated at one time

as the most successful academic textbook in total sales for all fields. This widely used book was significant in shaping the view of psychology acquired by many thousands of introductory readers, and it was effective in attracting into the discipline many bright scholars. Beyond his textbooks, Hilgard's broad knowledge of the discipline, his seriousness about its advancement, and his willingness to look beyond the current boundaries of the field made him particularly effective as a teacher, mentor, and scholar.

In early 1940-41, the United States was edging towards World War II, and many academics were asked to contribute their expertise towards the upcoming national war effort. Hilgard left Stanford from 1941 to 1944 to work in the Offices of War Information and Civil Requirements in Washington, DC. Much of his work involved developing and analyzing surveys of civilian activities in connection with the war effort; later he worked in the Bureau of Overseas Intelligence.

During that tour of duty, Hilgard served on a National Research Council committee charged with planning for the expansion and practical uses of psychology during and after the war. That committee recommended several actions designed to bring the academic science of psychology into closer relations with the emerging profession of psychology. Their proposals had a major influence after the war on the reorganization efforts of the American Psychological Association (the largest association of psychologists, currently numbering over 150,000 members). Later, Hilgard played prominent roles in APA governance, including its Board of Directors and its presidency in 1949.

Upon returning to Stanford from Washington in 1944, Hilgard was appointed Executive Head of the Psychology Department, a post in which he served until he was appointed as Dean of Stanford's Graduate School from 1951 to 1955. He was central in guiding the direction of new faculty selections and strongly argued for more university resources to be committed to the behavioral sciences.

The early 1950s were a period of large educational grants to universities from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. Hilgard was successful in obtaining funding from the Ford Foundation and the Social Science Research Council to strengthen social science departments at Stanford, particularly psychology. The influx of students on the GI Bill after the war required rapid expansion of the faculty. Hilgard appointed Robert Sears, a former colleague from Yale, as the new Executive Head of the department. Together they built a strong faculty with many stellar appointments. These appointments increased the visibility of the psychology department, attracting better graduate students, leading in turn to its continuing national eminence. The groundwork for much of this rise in prominence was laid by Hilgard's wise counsel and influence.

During his term as Graduate Dean, Hilgard was instrumental in bringing to Stanford the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. He had been a consultant to the Ford Foundation and was able to persuade the Foundation to provide start-up endowment funds for such a Center and to locate it on land borrowed from Stanford. Ever since its establishment, the Center and its annual cast of visiting scholars have provided continual intellectual stimulation for the behavioral sciences at Stanford and other West Coast universities.

Returning to his research career, Hilgard had been winding down his research on conditioning since the late 1940's and was turning increasingly to the uses of psychology in

education and to studies of human motivation and personality. Indicative of his national eminence in education, for example, he was among a delegation of educators invited by General MacArthur to advise his staff and the Japanese ministry of education on demilitarizing the Japanese school system after World War II.

Hilgard's openness to new and risky research projects was illustrated by his decision, after 11 years as chairman and Dean, to move into a totally different area, namely, the study of hypnosis, a topic that was both challenging and fascinating to him. He persuaded the Ford Foundation to provide funds to help him set up the Stanford Laboratory for the Study of Hypnosis. It was from this laboratory that Hilgard was to make his major scientific contributions over the ensuing 25 years. This laboratory also trained many of the graduate students and post-doctoral scholars who were to become dominating figures in hypnosis research over succeeding generations.

Hilgard's first major contribution in hypnosis research was the development (with co-author Andre Weitzenhoffer) of performance scales for reliably measuring differences among people in their susceptibility to hypnosis. These measuring scales, published in their book Hypnotic Susceptibility (1965), have been standard instruments in the field ever since.

A second major project was Hilgard's study of the use of hypnosis to control pain. The reductions in pain due to hypnosis were sufficient for a range of clinical applications and these studies were published by Hilgard with his psychiatrist collaborator and wife, Josephine, in their book Hypnosis in the Relief of Pain (1975).

Hilgard's major theoretical formulation regarding hypnosis was articulated in his book, Divided Consciousness (1977). He proposed a hierarchical system of mental modules nested under central monitoring and executive functions. Various non-conscious modules were assumed to be accessed and activated by hypnotic suggestions which by-passed initiative and conscious intention from the central executive of the mind. Divided Consciousness has provided a major reference work for students interested in the modern study of non-conscious processes

Following his formal retirement to Emeritus status in 1969, Hilgard continued his research on hypnosis with federal support; in fact, he published more during his early years of retirement than he had during the preceding five years. During his retirement Hilgard also renewed his interest in the history of psychology and authored two books: first, an annotated compilation of presidential addresses by some of the historically significant past presidents of APA (Hilgard, 1978); and second, his monumental volume *Psychology in America: A historical survey* (1987). The latter, written with masterful facility, covered almost every major field of psychology and contained profiles of many eminent American psychologists of the late nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century. Hilgard could write authoritatively about these important figures because he had known most of them personally, interacted with them frequently at conferences, and followed their work closely. A tribute to Hilgard's good health and vigor of mind is that he continued lecturing and writing well into his late 80's, even travelling alone overseas at age 91 to give a public lecture upon receipt of an honorary doctorate from the University of Oslo.

Hilgard received many professional honors and awards for his scientific research and for his service to the academic community. He was elected to a term as President of almost every scholarly organization he joined. He was awarded the Warren Medal from the Society

of Experimental Psychologists, the APA Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions, an APA Citation for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to the discipline, the Gold Medal Award from the American Psychological Foundation, the Franklin Gold Medal from the International Society of Hypnosis, the National Academy of Sciences' Award for Scientific Reviewing, and the Wilbur Cross Medal as an outstanding graduate of Yale University. In addition, he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Education, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and received honorary doctoral degrees from several universities. In 1991 *The American Psychologist* recognized him as one of the 10 most important contemporary psychologists of the period.

Despite his busy schedule, Hilgard was a devoted family man. He and Josephine Rohrs were married in 1931 while they were students at Yale, and they remained devoted to one another until Josie's death in 1989. The Hilgards raised two children, Henry, now an emeritus professor of biology at the University of California at Santa Cruz, CA, and a daughter, Elizabeth Jecker, who continues her work in veterinary medicine and lives in San Luis Obispo, CA. There are 5 grown grandchildren, 3 from Henry, and 2 from Elizabeth.

Jack Hilgard was a respected and beloved man throughout his professional life. He was politically liberal and dedicated to social and community service. He held strong sympathies for victims of injustice --- a friend of the underdog, the working poor, the downtrodden. He was exceedingly fair-minded and charitable, and gave much aid anonymously to many community agencies and people down on their luck. In demeanor, he was a gentle, polite, positive man who practically never swore or spoke ill of anybody, not even his critics. Few of us ever saw him angry, frustrated, depressed, or upset. He enjoyed scientific bull sessions with colleagues and students. He loved life, music, games, and having fun with his family and friends. For psychology, he has left a wonderful legacy of his work and writings; for his students and colleagues, he has left us with mellowing memory-albums filled with lovable, personal images. He will be sorely missed by the profession, and especially by all who knew him.

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