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PSYCH MATTERS

Vol. 2, Issue 1
Sept./Oct. 2000

Goodbyes and Hellos by Prof. Robby Stewart Ph.D



Prof. _____

Developmentalists understand that change and transition is the only constant in our lives. Even so, some transitions still catch us unprepared and remind us of the ephemeral nature of our existence. On May 15, 2000 Professor David G. Lowy died while in his home. Professor Lowy had begun phased retirement and was considering moving up his retirement date so he could have more time with his grandchildren. He had just returned from a trip to Peru and had stopped in Arizona to visit his children and grandchildren.

Professor Lowy earned his doctoral degree from the University of Tennessee in 1956. He worked as a clinical psychologist in Connecticut before accepting a position at Oakland University in 1962. While at Oakland, Professor Lowy continued his clinical practice at the Lafayette Clinic in Detroit, at the Psychiatric Center of Michigan in Mt. Clemens, and at the Psychiatric Center of Michigan in New Baltimore. He was also very active as a psychological consultant with Catholic Social Services of Royal Oak.

During his years with the Department of Psychology, Professor Lowy taught classes in abnormal psychology, tests and measurements, psychopathology of childhood, and projective testing. He served as director of Oakland University's Psychological Services from 1962 to 1964 and then was

very active in the development and coordination of the department's Masters program in clinical psychology from 1965 to 1984. Professor Lowy served as acting chair of the department from 1978 to 1979 and then as chair from 1995 to 1998.

All of this information, and more, can be found on curriculum vita lying in old files. What is not found there is recognition that he sang opera while walking through Pryale Hall, or that he would enter your office while tearing a bagel in half saying, "Here, eat a bit, you look undernourished." Perhaps the most vivid memories most of us will have is of Professor Lowy standing on the front porch of Pryale Hall, with his pipe in hand, greeting everyone who came by with a resounding "Buongiorno!!!" During the eulogies presented at his funeral service one theme was repeated by speaker after speaker: David was a kind and gentle man, and he will be missed.

The second "Good bye" for the department was of a quite different nature. Professor David E. Walker has left his position as Special Lecturer to take a clinical psychology position with the Yakima Nation in the central portion of the state of Washington. Professor Walker earned his BA in Psychology from Oakland University with departmental honors and an alumni research award in 1986. In 1992 he received his doctoral degree from the University of Detroit Mercy where he focused on the observation and analysis of cultural differences in emotional expression. David began teaching part-time for the department in 1991 and continued until the Spring of 2000.

Hello's are much more fun, and they help to balance the loss of two colleagues. Last spring we hired Professor Cindy Sifonis to join the faculty and are very happy to have her here with us. Professor Sifonis earned her doctoral degree from Texas A & M University in 1998 and since then has held a postdoctoral research position at the

Beckman Institute of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests focus on category representation and use, and in studying how the context within which a category is used affects its interpretation. Professor Sifonis has written a column to serve as her own introduction.

The second "hello" arrived also within minutes of when David Walker informed me that he was thinking about moving West. Professor Allan Bellamy earned his BA in Psychology from Oakland University in 1995 and has recently defended his dissertation to obtain a doctoral degree in clinical psychology from the University of Tennessee. Professor Bellamy arrived just as we needed to find someone to cover the Spring and Summer classes previously assigned to Professors Butzlaff and Harrison (both received research grants), so he has already been very busy in the department. He is now completing his year-long internship in clinical psychology under the supervision of faculty members at Wayne State University and will teach one class in the Fall and another in the Winter sessions. I encourage you to find the opportunity to meet and get to know Allen. ♦

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The Department Matters

It's "back to school time". The days are getting shorter and the commercials on TV tell me its time to buy the kids clothes, get school supplies, pack those lunches with foods kids like to eat. Yeah, right. Surely there is a more advantageous and less commercial way to enter the academic season. One way I know that the school year is gearing up is that I start getting more and more telephone calls and emails from students asking all sorts of questions. Today I thought I might share some of these questions with you:



Prof. Stewart

"Why won't you let Professor Christine Hansen have any research assistants?" Gee, I didn't know that I was doing anything to block her from having assistants. When I asked what had led her to this conclusion the student replied that she had seen my name listed in the schedule of classes beside the "Research Apprenticeship" and "Reading and Research Projects" classes and had assumed that anyone wanting an apprenticeship position or an independent research project could only work with me. Let me clarify how these classes (and Field Experiences, College Apprentice Teaching, and Honors Independent Studies) actually work: if you want to take any of these five classes you need to speak with any faculty member to arrange what you will be doing. The faculty name listed in the schedule of classes is the "professor of record" meaning that this person will be the one responsible for submitting grades at the end of the semester for all faculty who are supervising students in these courses. Imagine the mess it would be if we had a separate section of each of these 5 five courses for all 14 members of the department.

"OK, I want to work with Professor Hansen (or Butzlaff, Eberly, Schellenbach, or any other member of the department). What are they doing this semester? Do they have openings?" I have a reasonable idea what I am doing this semester, and I may even have a good idea of what my colleagues are doing, but I cannot keep up with whether or not they have openings in their labs or teaching assistant slots. I encourage you to contact them yourself. They all have email accounts, mailboxes in Pryale Hall, and posted office hours. If you are shy, then meet them through a Psi Chi activity get past the shyness.

"OK, I want an internship; could you set it up for me?" Nope, not my job. Joyce Esterberg in the Office of Placement and Career Services is always sending me memo's announcing that she has a position that is looking for a psychology major. I post these in Pryale Hall, distribute them to the faculty, and announce them in my classes. I also post any other opening announcements that are mailed to me, but I do not create the positions. Any member of the faculty can supervise these placements to insure that a sufficient academic component is

present if you wish to receive course credit for the experience.

"They told me that you would approve this petition for me to ..." Who is this ambiguous 'they'? Are you one credit short of 124 hours because you transferred in a 3-credit course? Sure, no problem. Are you asking to walk in a graduation ceremony one semester early while you are completing your final course? Sure, no problem. But if you are asking to walk in that ceremony when you still have three or four courses to go then you better have a very good reason. If you are trying to gain exemption from one of the general education requirements or major requirement then you should have a very good reason to support this. I notice that most petition requests come in at the last moment and usually include some rationale indicating that someone somewhere told a student that X was a good thing to do, and now the student has been informed that they are not ready to graduate. I encourage you to consider the same advice I gave my own kids when they started college: read and understand the degree requirements as published in the undergraduate catalog (yeah it's boring, read it anyway); go to see an advisor if you have any questions and write down what that advisor says and get them to sign and date it; keep a file of all this mess until you graduate and have your degree in hand. Advisors can and do make mistakes, but not nearly as often as one might think given the number of petitions floating around. Too often students tell me that someone in an advising office told them to do something that turns out to be directly contrary to the degree requirements. If this can be substantiated then the advisor will be corrected and the student will probably be granted an exception. Most often, the "they told me" position is doomed to failure. To avoid the failure: know the requirements, review what you have done, plan for what you need to do, and be responsible for yourself.

Robby

It's A Fact:

Research is one of the most important criteria for getting into a graduate school program!
Research experience provides a great avenue towards creating a project that can be presented at Meeting of the Minds, which looks great on a resume!

PSYCHMATTERS
The Department of Psychology
Oakland University - 111 Pryale Hall
Rochester, MI 48309-4489

or
e-mail: pmatters@oakland.edu

PSI CHI MATTERS

by
Patrick Faircloth, Psi Chi President

Welcome to a new semester at Oakland University! Whether this is your first or last year here at Oakland I urge you to join the Oakland Psychology Club and if you are eligible, the Psi-Chi Chapter.

There will be a heavy emphasis this year on Membership Growth, Club/Chapter visibility and Research!

Membership Growth: This semester many of the Club/Chapter Officers will be very active in getting information out to perspective new members and current members by visiting classes, posting flyers and arranging study circles in the Psi-Chi office and lower level of Pryale Hall.

Phi Chi/Chapter visibility: The Club/Chapter will be offering a new line of logo items we encourage you to purchase to help increase the visibility of our Club/Chapter around campus

Research: In the last two years or so, many times I have heard students say, "If I only knew doing research was so important for my major I would have started it before my senior year."

One way to become a research assistant is to come to our meetings and listen to our guest speakers. Many of our guest speakers are Professors currently engaged in research and willing to take on assistants.

In the last two years the research that I have done with Dr. Robby Sterwart, Dr. Christine Hansen and with Dr. Ron Butzlaff, have yeilded some of the most interesting and rewarding experiences that I have had at Oakland. The course credits for being a research asistant are Psy 487, 488, 489 and are recommended for your consideration in the Department "Majoring in Psychology" booklet.

Remember, our Monthly Meetings are, held on the first Tuesday of each month, from noon to 1:00pm, lunch is always free, and all students are welcome. ♦

2000-2001 Officers of the OU Psi Chi Chapter/ Psychology Club

Pres: Patrick Faircloth
Vice Pres: Cheryl Stayer and
Jacquelyn Watters
Secretary: Tanya Adman
Treasurer:..Tamara Jackson
Student Editors of
PSYCHMATTERS:
Michelle Pelker and Jessica Sharp

Q&A

Q: Who studied children's concepts of the rules of nature by asking Swiss children about their games of marbles??

Q: Coined by Eugen Bleuler in 1911, what disorder means "split personality" or split mind"??

Q: A _____ is any event following a response that strengthens the response.

A: Reinforcement

A: Schizophrenia

A: Piaget

Resources For Alumni

**Please take the time
to fill out this
column to help us
keep updated!**

New address?
Please inform us!!

Donations: Please support Psi Chi/Psych. club activities:

\$20___ \$100___

\$50___ Other___

* Please make checks payable to Oakland University and write Department of Psychology on the memo line.

Got something to say?
Share Your News or comments! Send any tidbits you would like to share about experience in your career, grad school, or psychology in general. This information is valuable and fun to read for current students!

* Please indicate if you do not wish any of your information to be used in future issues: ___

Send all information to:

**Attn: Psi Chi
Oakland University
111 Pryale Hall
Rochester, Mi.
48309-4489**

PROFILE: Prof. Cynthia Sifonis Ph.D.

by Prof. Cynthia Sifonis, Ph.D.

Hello. My name is Cynthia Sifonis and I have been informed that this space is mine to tell you a little bit about myself. First, let me say that I am extremely pleased to have a chance to work at Oakland University with the fine people in the psychology department. There are so many things about this environment to admire. For example, there is a real commitment to providing students with quality education. This is important to me. I believe that it is through education that we can have the greatest impact on the world around us. This is not an opportunity to be taken lightly. Why do I place such importance on education? Probably because of my own experiences in college. During the course of my education I have had the opportunity to be affiliated with universities of varying sizes and with varying degrees of commitment to undergraduate education. Of all these institutions, the one I enjoyed the most was the one that granted me my undergraduate degree - Bemidji State University. Never heard of it? Few have. It is a very small school in northern Minnesota. Class sizes range from about 10 to 30 students. What makes Bemidji so wonderful is the quality of education it provides. The professors working there are absolutely dedicated to seeing that their students receive the finest training they are capable of providing. They are so successful that I had no trouble at all adjusting to either the coursework or teaching style when I went on to graduate school at Texas A&M University. It was such a pleasant and educational experience for me I want to be able to provide it for my own students here at Oakland University.

Another thing I admire about this university is its commitment to growth. It is exciting to be affiliated with an institution that is making such a concerted effort towards bettering itself. I am really looking forward to having the opportunity to help influence and facilitate the growth and development of the university as a whole and of the psychology department in particular. It is rare for a new hire to have the opportunity to influence the evolution of the department in which she works.

This semester I will be teaching a course in Cognitive Psychology and a course in Basic Psychological Processes. Because I am fond of technology and its power to enhance education, I am making both of these classes technology dependent to a large degree. They will both be taught using Power Point presentations. These presentations will include multimedia demonstrations created with Macromedia Director or accessed through the internet. The courses will also have a web-based component where students can access outlines of class lectures, their grades, the syllabus, answers to frequently asked questions, and topic-related links. I think it is fun creating these kinds of courses, and teaching using these tools. I hope the students enrolled my classes find it both educational as well as fun.

In conclusion, I would like to tell you a little about my life and interests. My husband, Jeff, works as a creative director for a Chicago ad agency. He is also a talented artist, designer, and inventor (he has a patent pending for a new type of motorcycle kickstand). Our son, Damian, will be starting middle school this year. He is also an artist and spends much of his time designing games, drawing cartoons, and making clay miniatures. He is already a talented writer and has even had one of his short stories published.

I share many interests with Jeff and Damian. Like Jeff, I enjoy riding motorcycles, rock and roll music, playing guitar, and rollerblading. Like Damian, I enjoy reading fantasy and science fiction, playing computer games, and making clay miniatures. All of us share a love of art and good food (especially sushi). Unlike the two of them, I love to play racquetball and hope it doesn't take me too long to find racquetball partners at the Rec. Center.

There is one other passion in my life - psychology and psychological research. I know it sounds trite to say my profession is one of the loves of my life but it is true. I have been interested in psychology for almost as long as I can remember. I had a difficult time deciding the psychological discipline I should pursue in graduate school. I chose Cognitive Psychology because of my inter-

est in concepts, categories, and creativity. I want to know how we use the knowledge stored in our concepts and categories. I am especially interested in how this knowledge is used in creative endeavors (e.g., writing stories, coining new phrases, painting).

In my lab I have several projects underway reflecting my interests in psychology. Most of the projects examine the manner in which we use our concepts and categories and the effect this use has on the representation of that knowledge. For example, I am examining people's knowledge of food that is derived from daily interactions with food (e.g., dinner foods, snacks, breakfast foods). I am contrasting it with other organizations of food domain knowledge (e.g., meats, breads, fruits) in order to determine how our interactions with food affect the way we think about it. I am also interested in how we use this knowledge during planning (e.g., planning dinner) and creative endeavors (e.g., making a new snack food). I am looking forward to being able to research these and many more fascinating phenomena in the years to come. ♦

Fun Facts:

Did you know that infants fear drop-offs?? Gibson's and Walker's famous experiment dubbed the "Visual Cliff" showed that at about two years of age infants can perceive depth!

Were you aware that by the year 2030, 20% of the U.S. population will be 65 years of age or older??

Infants are amazing! Psychologists have determined that at 2 to 3 months infant can distinguish between phenomena (i.e. between *ba* and *pa*).

Alumni Matters: Are You Going to Grad School?

By Cheryl Peters, Graduate Student, Oregon State University

Frightened of what's after graduation? Interested in going to graduate school, but afraid of the process? Don't know how to pick a program? Hate the GRE? Can't talk to a professor, but really need research experience? Yeah, I've been there. But now I'm in grad school, so something must have gone alright. Here's some tips on how I got my OU education to work for me and how I applied to grad schools. I'm not trying to re-invent the wheel, so I've included resources every serious student should have.

The Complete Guide to Graduate School Admission: Psychology and Related Fields, Written by Patricia Keith-Spiegel and published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, was my favorite book. It is easy reading, gives great advice, has an extensive table of contents and real life examples. I ended up highlighting this book and returning to it for each step along the way. I modeled my resume, personal statements and cover letter from her examples and suggestions. Graduate Study in Psychology, Published by the American Psychological Association (APA), is a great book to help you find schools with the program you want. Get the 2000 edition (you don't want old info.) and the CD-ROM may be a good option if using the guide long term. Getting In: A step-by-step plan for gaining admission to graduate school in psychology, also published by the APA, offers a timeline for the application process, as well as basic information on types of psychology and differences in degrees. This book is very important for beginners unsure of how to make choices regarding what to study and where, but is unlikely to help the student who has identified a program of interest.

The first big step for getting into grad school involves answering the incredibly difficult question: What field are you going to study? The best place to start is with honest self-assessment. This question took me two full years to answer and two more years to refine. I took six years to complete my B.A. at OU and just about everything ending in "ology" was on my plate at sometime. I juggled many combinations of majors and minors. Until I found a combination that was comfortable with my own way of think-

ing about the world, kept me interested in science, and aroused my curiosity enough to embark on the crazy trip through the graduate school admission process. This exploration of interests was critical in my personal statement that answered why I wanted to go to grad school.

When you get to the stuff about having a MATCH between your interests and faculty interests you'll probably be overwhelmed. It is a tall order. My advice, the match is very important, but the steps that lead you in a direction toward a particular program at a specific school are just as important.

Over the years, I bought all the books I could find to help me get into grad school. I was especially prone to buying GRE practice books because I was so fearful of the outcome and overall importance of my scores. I even took the class ETS (educational testing service) offers at OU for five Saturdays during the spring before I took the GRE. The class was nothing I couldn't do with a math review book and a dictionary to learn words, so overall I thought it was a waste of a few hundred dollars. Although, I do believe that you need to study and be well prepared for the test. I recommend getting the GRE Big Book (paper tests by ETS) and the Powerprep software (computer tests and tutorial on CD-ROM by ETS). Order by phone or Internet. Look in the GRE bulletin (available 3rd floor O'Dowd) for prices and contact information.

When to take the GRE? I suggest just before labor day (the start of the fall semester). I took the GRE general test on September 3rd and I had enough time to revise my choices for applying to schools based on my scores (since you get your scores right after the test!). For students required to take the GRE Psychology test in addition to the general test, I recommend taking it as late as possible and not on the same day as the general. I also suggest signing up early, so that you can take it right at OU. The bottom-line, how I got into grad school? Research! Research experience was my biggest ticket into the OU afterlife. Research experience opened many doors for me. I learned to talk with professors (which eventually led to letters of recommendations), I witnessed and was involved in different stages of research projects conducted

by faculty (enabling me to conduct my own research project with a classmate), wrote papers (writing sample for applications), and went to conferences to present (great resume builder). Other practical skills were helpful in getting grad schools to take me seriously, such as doing teaching apprenticeships, gaining computer skills (take PSY 362 if possible), and being involved with Psi Chi/Psych Club.

The grad school application process can be enormous, time consuming and anxiety provoking. I strongly suggest good organization. Keep all materials in a file organizer, save everything until you are done. Make a list of all the materials needed for each application and start with the things on the common list. For example, make a resume first and then write your tailored personal statements. Go to the Graduate School Workshops sponsored by Psi Chi/Psych Club. I went four years in a row and learned something different each time.

As my final advice, here is a list of what I included in every packet I sent out to each of the grad schools I applied to: info on OU (made from copies of the OU handbook), short cover letter explaining contents of the package, copy of my GRE scores (unofficial), copy of transcript (unofficial), resume, and a copy of independent honors thesis (scientific writing sample). This was in addition to all forms the school requested, such as letters of recommendation, personal statement, application and check for application fee. Regardless of what you are planning to do after graduation, I wish you well with your journeys and I hope you enjoy your time at OU. ♦

Quick Tip:

Check out Perfect Personal Statements by Mark Alan Stewart to help make your resume or application to graduate school even better with a strong personal statement!!!

PSYCHI MATTERS

Postage

The Quarterly Newsletter of Psychology at Oakland University

No. 97284
The Department of Psychology
Oakland University
111 Pryale Hall
Rochester, MI 48309-4489

To:

FINAL MATTERS: Calender 2000

- | | | | |
|--------------|--|--------------|--|
| 09/5 | <u>Monthly Meeting</u>
<u>Noon-1:00pm</u>
<u>Lake Huron Rm.Lower level</u>
<u>Oakland Center -</u>
<u>Guest Speaker: Prof.</u>
<u>Stewart Department Chair</u>
<u>All Students Welcome</u>
<u>Free Lunch Provided</u> | 10/21 | <u>Workshop:Optimizing</u>
<u>Research Skills: Using the</u>
<u>Internet & Library Resoucrs.</u>
<u>9:00am-Noon</u>
<u>NOTE: seating limited to 30</u>
<u>persons (sign up early)</u>
<u>Held in rooms 225a & 225b</u>
<u>in KresgeLibrary</u>
<u>Free Refreshments provided.</u>
<u>All Students Welcome</u> |
| 09/12 | <u>Monthly Meeting</u>
<u>Noon-1:00pm</u>
<u>Lake Huron Rm.Lower level</u>
<u>Oakland Center</u>
<u>Guest Speaker: TBA</u>
<u>All Students Welcome</u>
<u>Free Lunch Provided</u> | 10/28 | <u>Workshop: Careers in</u>
<u>Psy./Graduate Workshop I</u>
<u>With Prof. Eberly</u>
<u>9:00am to Noon</u>
<u>Held in 203 O'Dowd Hall</u>
<u>Free Refreshments Provided</u>
<u>All Students Welcome</u> |
| 10/3 | <u>Monthly Meeting</u>
<u>Noon-1:00pm</u>
<u>Lake Huron Rm. Lower level .</u>
<u>Oakland Center</u>
<u>Guest Speaker: TBA</u>
<u>All Students Welcome</u>
<u>Free Lunch Provided</u> | | |

REMINDER

The Psi Chi/Psychology
Club meets the first
Tuesday of every
month from 12-1pm
in the Oakland Center
Free lunch provided.
All students welcome.

Psi Chi/Psychology Club
www.oakland.edu/psych/psi-chi/

FALL OFFICE HOURS:
12-1pm, Mon.-Thur.

(lower lounge of Pryale Hall)