# IN MEMORIAM

Gaylord Ellison
Professor of Psychology, Emeritus
Los Angeles
1938– 2003

Gaylord Ellison, professor of psychology, came to UCLA as an assistant professor in 1966. Prior to his arrival, he had earned a B.A. from the University of Nebraska, a Ph.D. from Yale, and completed postdoctoral work under the famous intellectual descendant of Pavlov, Jerzy Konorski, at the Nencki Institute in Warsaw. Gaylord was, throughout his career, an energetic, charismatic – even flamboyant – character, definitely not a "donnish" academic. At the time of Gaylord's retirement in 2001, one of his early Ph.D. students, himself near retirement from Amherst, recalled, "Gaylord … riding his motor scooter to and from work, always in a coat and tie, the tie invariably flying over his shoulder as he sailed down the road.... I remember thinking when I first saw him on his scooter that he wasn't the typical college professor. Little did I know!" Even at the time of his retirement Gaylord would arrive late for noon- hour meetings because he needed to finish his lunch- time basketball games at the Wooden Center.

Over the years Gaylord attracted some of the best of our graduate students to his lab, many of whom have gone on to distinguished academic careers; a few have become illustrious. And undergraduates adored him. His lectures in the large behavioral neuroscience course were always hugely popular, especially his lectures on the neuroscience of sleep, dreaming, and psychopathology, which earned him teacher ratings that put other instructors in that team- taught course to shame. In 1997 he was awarded the Department of Psychology's Distinguished Teaching Award in recognition of his years of inspiring teaching.

In the turbulent 60s, amidst student disaffection connected with the Vietnam War, Gaylord decided that undergraduates at UCLA were getting a raw deal and deserved more attention. He began taking large numbers of starry- eyed undergrads into the lab and making them real collaborators in his research, a practice that continued to the end of his career. Colleagues with offices near Gaylord's remember the frequent lab meetings at which his office overflowed with hordes of undergrad assistants all volubly discussing the lab's latest experiments and plans for future ones.

Gaylord had a quick, deep, and restless mind. At seminars he could be counted on to ask difficult and unexpected questions, even during discussion of topics he knew little about. His own research interests changed course several times during his career. He was an impatient scientist. In response to new research ideas that would require new and expensive equipment, Gaylord would often go to the library, then to surplus stores and junk yards, and then build the necessary equipment himself. He would be up and running with some technique that other investigators would get going only after grant writing and delays of several years.

During his early years at UCLA, Gaylord made use of a technique he had developed for disconnecting the portion of the brain called the hypothalamus, which plays a crucial role in motivation, from the rest of the brain– while maintaining its connections with the pituitary, without which animals cannot be kept alive. This technique led to several observations that have become standard textbook fare. Before long however, he became interested in the quite unrelated matter of experimental psychoses and the use of animals to create models of human mental illnesses. His interest was triggered by the early efforts to treat psychotic conditions of various kinds with drugs that altered levels of natural brain chemicals. Gaylord became enthusiastic about the research potential of such drugs — to clarify, in normals, the functions of the chemical systems affected by the drugs. In having that idea, and in his decision to study the effects of psychoactive drugs on animals

living in social groups in a biologically natural environment, Gaylord was well ahead of his time. He established a free- living rat colony and studied animals' behavior patterns and social interactions before, and after, pharmacological manipulations. He observed effects of the pharmacological agents that had never been seen before, and his work hit the popular press when he found that free access to alcohol led to behaviors strikingly reminiscent of human alcohol- related behaviors (cocktail hours, binge drinking by individuals of low social status, etc.).

In the context of studying the effects of psychoactive drugs on animals in naturalistic situations, Gaylord became aware that long, continually maintained levels of abused drugs, analogous to the profile of human users, had effects different from those of the occasional injections typically used in animal experimentation. In a series of studies using implanted slow- release pellets of psychoactive drugs he observed behavioral effects not previously seen in laboratory research. Importantly, he demonstrated psychological effects that persisted long after cessation of the drug treatment and found such effects to be correlated with long- lasting damage or altered neurochemistry at particular brain loci. Gaylord actively pursued this research even after his retirement.

Gaylord died August 26, 2003. He will be remembered by students and friends for his quick and restless mind, his originality, his infectious enthusiasm, his irrepressible irreverence, and his great charm.

Franklin Krasne