



IN MEMORIAM

Harry J. Carlisle
Professor of Psychology, Emeritus
Santa Barbara
1931 — 2003

Harry J. Carlisle, a UCSB biopsychologist and expert on the biological basis of motivated behaviors, died suddenly at his home in Santa Barbara on September 30, 2003. He was 70 years old.

Harry Carlisle was a life-long Santa Barbaran. Born in the city in 1931, he received his elementary and secondary schooling in Santa Barbara, and then attended UCSB earning B. A. and M. A. degrees in the Department of Psychology. During those years Harry studied with Robert W. Reynolds, at the time the only biopsychologist on the UCSB faculty. This work resulted in publications on the effects of various drugs on food intake in rats and this turned out to be a seminal experience that initiated Harry's career interest in studying the biology of motivated behaviors. Harry went from UCSB to the University of Washington, Seattle, where he received a Ph.D. from the joint program in psychology and physiology in 1964. At Seattle he began to study temperature regulation in mammals, a topic on which he was to become a world's expert. His next move was to a postdoctoral fellowship at the Institute of Neurological Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, Philadelphia. There he worked with Eliot Stellar and published with him a very heavily-cited paper dealing with caloric regulation and food preferences in normal rats and rats whose appetites had been rendered abnormal as a consequence of brain damage. In 1965 Harry completed the circle by returning to UCSB as an assistant professor of psychology. He became professor of psychology in 1977, a post he held with distinction until his retirement in 2001.

The ability of an animal to regulate body temperature within a very narrow range is crucial for survival. Prior to the work of Harry Carlisle, and that of a few other pioneers, temperature regulation had usually been studied as a strictly physiological phenomenon. But animals regulate body temperature through a range of motivated behaviors; most obviously, by moving to warmer or cooler locations in their environments. Harry's central contribution was to bring such motivated behaviors under strict laboratory control and study. In a favored paradigm, developed in the Carlisle laboratory, an animal — usually a rat — was placed in a temperature-controlled chamber and trained to perform an operant response, for instance pressing a bar, which resulted in a brief change in the ambient temperature. In this way an animal seeking heat in a cold environment could be studied in the same fashion as a hungry animal in search of food. A primary goal of such research was to understand the biology underlying this motivated behavior and thus a typical experiment might involve some manipulation of brain physiology, for instance a localized change in neurotransmitter availability or, perhaps, the localized cooling or heating of a discrete structure in the brain to study how peripherally-originating signals were sensed centrally. Over the years, Harry Carlisle and a long list of graduate and undergraduate research assistants pursued experiments of this general sort. As more sophisticated genetic manipulations and improvements in neuropharmacology came along, these too were incorporated as tools for better understanding the biology of motivated behaviors. The result of much hard work was a steady stream of publications which earned Harry a reputation as an ingenious and careful experimentalist.

Harry Carlisle spent a sabbatical year in 1971-72 at the Institute of Animal Physiology, University of Cambridge. The English research ethic obviously appealed to him because he later formed a long-term working relationship with Michael Stock, a British physiologist who held an appointment at the University of London. This collaboration involved a number of reciprocal visits of the two between Santa Barbara and

London. The scientific result from this interaction was a series of papers published over a nearly ten- year period, most of which examined the effects of newly discovered pharmacologic compounds on some aspects of temperature regulation. The social result was a warm relationship between Harry and Mike and their respective personal and scientific families and it provided an opportunity for Harry and his wife Jane to periodically enjoy the pleasures of London.

Harry Carlisle contributed much to UCSB and the Department of Psychology during his 36 years as a faculty member. Among his long- time colleagues, two images will endure. The first is that of Harry as a dedicated, completely hands- on, experimental scientist. He did everything associated with running experiments — assembling apparatus, animal surgery, data collection, and eventual preparation of experimental reports. This dedication demanded a constant presence in the lab. Fortunately, Harry’s office in the Department of Psychology was located only a few steps from his lab and he would be seen making that short trip numerous times every day, frequently with a disreputable looking cup containing lab- brewed coffee clenched in his hand. No detail was too small to escape his attention. This now rather old- fashioned way of doing lab science paid off handsomely. Students coming to work in the Carlisle laboratory soon came to view Harry as a collaborator, not merely as a lab manager. Beyond just teaching science, Harry taught these students about doing science. From Harry they learned that laboratory research was a way of life, not just a job to be conducted during strict banking hours. As he would sometimes point out, rats do not automatically know the difference between weekends and weekdays. Students who trained in his lab held in him high regard and, in later years, many recalled him and their time in the lab with obvious affection. A good number of these students returned to Santa Barbara in the fall of 2001 to attend a celebration dinner held to commemorate Harry’s retirement from UCSB and that evening was filled with warm and humorous stories about life in the Carlisle laboratory. On hearing of Harry’s death one former Ph. D. student, Charles Wilkinson, remembered him as “a generous, patient and sympathetic mentor” who was most of all, “a great guy.” The latter assessment was universally shared by Harry’s faculty colleagues.

Harry Carlisle made significant contributions to the teaching mission of the Department of Psychology, and he will be remembered for those as well. Over the years he taught a wide variety of courses, including several stints lecturing before hundreds of students in the Introductory Psychology course. He was very humorous in that role, but the humor, often anecdotes about the scientists whose work he was discussing, always served his scientific message. It was, however, to the curriculum in Biopsychology that Harry made his most important contributions. Along with Bob Reynolds, Harry initiated and nurtured a training program for undergraduates that became a formal major within the Psychology department where students could earn a B. S. degree in biopsychology. This program was unique in the UC system, and it soon became a great success, being particularly popular with students aspiring to eventual careers in the health professions or for those preparing for graduate schools. A focus of the major was Psychology 113L, a laboratory course in which students learned the rudiments of doing research on brain/ behavior relationships. Harry taught this course many times over the years, in so doing providing generations of UCSB students with a thorough grounding in the science and practice of animal research. Students found this course time consuming and demanding, but ultimately very rewarding.

Harry had a sly sense of humor that students came to enjoy and appreciate. A tradition in Psychology 113L was a party held in the teaching lab at the end of the course to recognize the accomplishments of the term. A high point of this affair, appropriately advertised as “the lab- closing party,” was the awarding of prizes for class achievement. These prizes consisted of an odd collection of curios and books that Harry had accumulated over the year and these would be awarded, with due ceremony, for an equally- idiosyncratic list of “achievement categories.” One year, for instance, a lab group was presented with a tuning fork to recognize their consistent inability to all arrive on time for the start of class. Students loved this side of Harry Carlisle, and so did all his friends.

Harry Carlisle was a treasured colleague who will be remembered as having quietly but effectively made lasting contributions to his science and to the Department of Psychology. This contribution has been formally recognized by the establishment at UCSB of the Harry Carlisle Memorial Scholarship Fund, funds from which will be used to support graduate students in Biopsychology.

Harry Carlisle was a quiet, gentle, good natured man. Having been both a football and a basketball player in high school, he had a lifelong interest in sports. He loved the wilderness and especially hiking and camping with his family. Harry is survived by his wife, Dr. Jane Carlisle, who is Associate Director of Counseling Services at UCSB, two children, Joseph, also a counselor, and Mara, an artist, and three grandchildren. Another child, Mark, an architectural designer, died as a young man.

Gerald H. Jacobs
John M. Foley