



IN MEMORIAM

Geoffrey Keppel
Professor of Psychology, Emeritus
UC Berkeley
1935 – 2010

Geoffrey Keppel, a professor emeritus of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, whose research expanded our understanding of what causes humans to forget, died on December 31, 2010, after a long struggle with chronic lymphatic leukemia. He was 75.

During his 47 years at UC Berkeley, Keppel served as dean of social sciences, chair of the Department of Psychology, and director of the Institute of Human Learning. His accolades include a Distinguished Teaching Award in 1993 and, at the time of his retirement in 1994, the prestigious Berkeley Citation.

Along with his mentors, UC Berkeley psychologist Leo Postman and Northwestern University psychologist Benton Underwood, who both preceded him in death, Keppel demonstrated that forgetting is the result of interference from a variety of sources, including past memories, various aspects of the current memory, and new memories.

“Keppel's work continues to be influential in describing and understanding how the human brain copes with interfering thoughts and memories,” said Stephen Hinshaw, chair of the UC Berkeley psychology department, quoting UC Berkeley psychologist Arthur Shimamura, a world- renowned memory expert.

Ruth H. Maki, a professor emeritus of psychology at Texas Tech University, studied statistics and experimental design under Keppel as a graduate student at UC Berkeley. She said his teaching inspired her love of statistics. “He touched many students, showing them that statistics isn't so hard and, in fact, can be fun,” Maki said. “Thousands of students were helped by his superb statistics textbooks. New revisions of his textbooks will be greatly missed.”

The oldest of three brothers, Keppel was born on March 17, 1935, in Oakland, California, and grew up in nearby Albany. His father worked for the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, but his true passion was writing poetry. Geoffrey Keppel and his brother Bruce both attended UC Berkeley and played on its water polo team. Their younger brother Stephen worked for the U.S. Postal Service.

Keppel and his wife Sheila, an art historian, were high school sweethearts. After earning a bachelor's degree in psychology at UC Berkeley in 1957, Keppel went on to obtain both a master's degree and a Ph.D. in psychology from Northwestern University, where he met Underwood, a pioneer in the post- World War II study of verbal learning and memory.

In 1963, Keppel joined UC Berkeley's Department of Psychology as an assistant professor. He was promoted to full professor in 1970. After more than a dozen years exploring the human memory, Keppel turned his

attention to experimental design in psychology and the social sciences. His goal was to show students of behavioral science how to conduct research in ways that allow for clear and statistically meaningful answers. This enterprise yielded a series of major works on experimental design and analysis. Those included *Design and Analysis: A Researcher's Handbook*, and *Data Analysis for Research Designs: Analysis of Variance and Multiple Regression/ Correlation Approaches*, which he wrote in conjunction with UC Berkeley psychology professor emeritus Sheldon Zedeck.

“Generations of psychologists around the world learned how to conduct rigorous research from these clear, precise and inspired volumes,” said UC Berkeley psychology professor emeritus Gerald (Jerry) Mendelsohn, a longtime friend and colleague of Keppel's. “The warmth, humor and concern for others that made him so fine a colleague and friend were among the qualities that made him so fine a teacher.”

In response to receiving the Distinguished Teaching Award in 1993, Keppel wrote: “I approach the undergraduate psychological statistics and methodology course by drawing the students into the puzzles and challenges of experimental research ... I do not present statistics as an arbitrary set of procedures, but as a means for revealing the answers to the fundamental issues that spark excitement in our discipline.”

Among other honors, Keppel served as president of the Midwestern Psychological Association, president of the Division of Experimental Psychology of the American Psychological Association, and chair of the Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology.

He was also the recipient of a National Institutes of Mental Health fellowship at the Applied Psychology Unit at Cambridge University in England, and of an additional fellowship at Wolfson College at Cambridge University.

In 1997, Keppel was honored by the American Psychological Association for distinguished career contributions to education and training in psychology.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Sheila Keppel of Oakland, California; daughter Melissa Keppel Riley of Point Reyes Station, California; son Peter Keppel of Asheville, North Carolina; and four grandchildren.

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