Our department recently received an endowment with an interesting backstory. “The idea came to me suddenly that I wanted to honor the man who was so encouraging of me to finish my doctorate,” says Dr. Damon Tempey, a clinical psychologist who completed his PhD at CU in 1974. “Funding an endowment seemed a good way to do this.” The man whom Dr. Tempey is referring to is Professor Peter Ossorio, who taught in CU’s clinical psychology program for over thirty years. In honor of his former mentor, the Peter G. Ossorio Memorial Graduate Student Award was created to support doctoral students in the clinical psychology program.

Professor Ossorio played a significant role in Dr. Tempey’s doctoral work from start to finish. “I was not an academic standout as an undergraduate because I majored in left-wing student politics at UC Berkeley,” Dr. Tempey jokes. He explains that at the time he applied, admission to the department’s clinical program was very competitive. Despite his unremarkable academic record, he was admitted with the full support of Professor Ossorio and others who saw his potential. Professor Ossorio continued as an important mentor throughout Dr. Tempey’s time in graduate school, chairing his dissertation committee and setting a standard of intellectual precision that he never forgot. “Pete was intellectually rigorous; he did not accept sloppy thinking,” Dr. Tempey recalls. “I’ve adopted this as my own standard of how to live and work.”

Professor Ossorio, who passed away in 2007, is remembered as a talented and innovative professor, psychologist and entrepreneur. With a passion for mentoring students, he directed over fifty dissertations during his time at CU. He is best known as the creator of a conceptual framework called Descriptive Psychology (DP), an approach that emphasizes the task of describing something accurately as a necessary precursor to creating theories about it. DP stresses the importance of precisely describing the components of behavior, such as performance, achievement, and “want” (or motivation), among other things. This framework has been applied to disciplines beyond the field of psychology including artificial intelligence, economics, and research methodology. More detailed information about DP can be found at CU’s Norlin Library and on the Society for Descriptive Psychology’s website at www.sdp.org.

Dr. Tempey, who has a clinical practice in Oregon, uses the DP approach in his work and says he’s especially interested in the “want” variable, i.e., what motivates a (Continued on page 3)

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Professor Peter Ossorio in 1973 (photo by CJ Peek)
Iwo Jima Veteran Professor Dick Jessor Honored

On the morning of February 19, 1945, twenty year old PFC Richard (Dick) Jessor, along with thousands of other Marines, was making preparations for the amphibious invasion of Iwo Jima. The battle for Iwo Jima was ferocious and American casualties were enormous—6,821 soldiers were killed and 19,217 were wounded. PFC Jessor was certain that he would not survive: “People were getting killed every day. It was really pretty much of a slaughter, so I didn't expect to get off.” Certain of his fate, during a brief interlude, he wrote to his parents to say goodbye.

Against the odds, PFC Jessor survived. He went on to complete his college education at Yale University and a PhD in clinical psychology from Ohio State University in 1951. He then joined the psychology department at the University of Colorado. He was one of the founders of the Institute of Behavioral Science and its director for over twenty years. He became internationally known for his research on adolescent and young adult development and the social psychology of risk behavior and, for ten years, directed the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Successful Adolescent Development Among Youth in High Risk Settings. For all of his accomplishment, he was promoted to the rank of Distinguished Professor of Behavioral Science. Even though formally retired, he has continued his commitment to his discipline and the University of Colorado, but has just published his final empirical paper.

PFC Jessor experienced the horrors of war. Yet, to those who know him he is a man of great optimism, an adventurer at heart, and to all appearances psychologically unscarred by Iwo Jima. When asked why this was the case, he recalled the evenings on Maui, where the troops returned to train for the next planned invasion, Japan. There he shared a tent with five others who had survived Iwo Jima. During the evenings each Marine would recount all the horrors they had witnessed, night after night reliving the same events. In looking back, he speculated that these nights were cathartic and may have enabled him to move on from the war. The emotions associated with Iwo Jima were deeply buried but they were not gone. They emerged full blown when he attended the movies Saving Private Ryan and Flags of Our Fathers.

At the recent Bolder Boulder Memorial Day celebration, Professor Dick Jessor was honored along with another Boulder County resident and Iwo Jima survivor, Jack Thurman, for their military service to the country. “I don't really feel I should personally be honored, but I feel the veterans should be honored,” Jessor said. “I concluded I was symbolic and that's really what it is. I'm standing in, especially for the guys I was with on Iwo.”

Dick Jessor is a remarkable man. We are grateful for his contributions to the war effort and to the university.

—Jerry Rudy
There are some people that when you meet with them, you just know you are sitting across from a treasure. And by treasure I mean something immeasurably valuable on multiple levels. These are the individuals in your life whom you want to spend time with, listen to and learn from.

It may be a family member, which in my case was my father. It may be a graduate school mentor, as in the case of Dr. Damon Tempey's mentor, Professor Peter Ossorio. It may be a colleague like Professor Richard Jessor who was a young Soldier in WWII who did not know if he would survive. As you will read, and as we who are privileged to work with him know, he not only survived, he thrived. The Fall 2014 Psychology News highlights a few of these treasures who have been or are still members of our department. Professor Alice Healy was recently honored with a Festschrift by local and international colleagues. Professor Walter Kintsch talks about his quite active “retirement.” Graduate student Lee Altamirano describes the treasures in her life and their influence now that she is in the final stages of completing her PhD. The beauty of these treasures is that they are perpetuated even beyond this life, as can be seen in the touching tributes to Professors Eugene Gollin and Thomas Landauer.

Each and every day, you have an opportunity. It is my hope that you use it well. Find the treasures in your life. Spend time with them. Listen to their stories. Learn from them. And savor each and every moment.

—Theresa D. Hernández

Endowment in Memory of Professor Ossorio (continued from page 1)

person’s behavior. “Pete defined four types of motivation (hedonic, prudential, ethical, aesthetic),” he says. “What motivates a person’s behavior makes a huge difference in what the person does. But to be clear, this parameter is just a tiny part of the entirety of DP. Other people who use DP may focus on other parameters.” Dr. Tempey has worked in the field of mental and behavioral health for over fifty years and continues to enjoy and expand his work. He is currently a health psychologist in an outpatient primary care medical clinic. He shares an interest in the field of medicine with his wife, Dr. Roxie Schell, a primary care physician specializing in geriatric and internal medicine.

Particularly when talking about family, Dr. Tempey is thankful for the direction his life has taken since graduate school. “My life has been good,” he says. “I’ve been married for almost thirty years. My wife and I have two sons, each of whom is making important contributions in the world. We’re proud of them.” He also values the memories he has of those creative days at CU with Professor Ossorio in the late sixties and early seventies. He especially remembers “riffing ideas and concepts during my second-year research practicum with Pete. We conceptualized what components would be needed to construct an artificial person in software form.” Those “riffs” ultimately led to research supported by a grant from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

The endowment in honor of Professor Ossorio will be an ongoing source of support for eligible graduate students in the clinical program. Eligibility will be contingent on financial need, with preference given to students making contributions in descriptive psychology, health behavioral psychology, or clinical psychology. —Alicia Segal
A Festschrift in honor of College Professor of Distinction Alice F. Healy was held at CU-Boulder in June 2014. The term “Festschrift” (literally, celebratory writing) refers to a volume of original contributions presented in an honorary event as a tribute to a scholar during his or her lifetime. The event was a celebration of Professor Healy’s distinguished and productive academic career, which she plans to continue into the future. Erica Wohldmann, a CU-Boulder alumna, was the primary conference organizer. Presenters, who shared original papers throughout the two-day event, included past students from CU-Boulder as well as from Yale, where Professor Healy was a faculty member from 1973 to 1981. Collaborators and well-known leaders in her field also presented their work in her honor. All presented papers will be published in a special issue of the American Journal of Psychology devoted to the Festschrift. As an additional tribute, the mayor of Boulder signed a proclamation declaring June 7th as Alice F. Healy Day.

The theme of Professor Healy’s Festschrift was knowledge, skill, and language acquisition, focusing on applications of basic research. This theme relates to her work in applying principles derived from experimental cognitive psychology to real-world situations such as training.

Professor Healy expressed how gratifying the event was for her. “There are some important hallmarks that occur in your life…The Festschrift was one of the best events in my life, one I was able to share with so many friends of mine, some of my favorite people.” To view photos of the event, go to http://tinyurl.com/healyfest.

Professor Emeritus Update: Walter Kintsch

Professor Emeritus Walter Kintsch joined our faculty in 1968 and has been a full professor for 36 years. His research interests were originally in relation to memory. In the 1960s, according to Professor Kintsch, memory research involved meaningless material such as nonsense syllables. Instead, he decided to look at what people do and don’t understand as they read, and how they learn from reading texts. “That’s how I entertained myself for 36 years,” he jokes.

Professor Kintsch came to the U.S. from Austria as a Fulbright scholar, not intending to stay. “But I got stuck here!” he remembers. He enrolled at the University of Kansas and received his PhD in 1960. He says he loved graduate school in America. Universities in Europe following World War II were crowded and gave students no personal attention. American education offered more freedom as well as personal attention, he says.

Professor Kintsch now looks at how to write texts so that they are easier for the reader to understand. His research influenced the designing of texts to incorporate information previously acquired; for example, a passage might encourage readers to connect what they found in the text to their own background information, helping them better comprehend the meaning of the text. “Otherwise, it is inert knowledge,” Professor Kintsch explains. He currently consults on a grant focusing on this issue of comprehension. His wife, Dr. Eileen Kintsch, a research associate at the Institute of Cognitive Science, is also part of this working group. They continue to travel to Austria and other interesting locations, but research remains Professor Kintsch’s primary activity in his “retirement” years. –Kate Bell
The Life of an Almost-Finished Grad Student: Lee Altamirano

If you ask Lee Altamirano about her early career aspirations, she’ll tell you straight out: “I wanted to be a model, an actress, or a rock star in my early twenties.” But her passion for math got the best of her, so she decided to major in physics as an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley.

Her interest in psychology came about accidentally. As an undergraduate, she happened to take a class in cognitive neuroscience and immediately became fascinated. After working in a number of cognitive neuroscience labs, she was convinced she wanted to be a researcher.

As a graduate student in our department’s cognitive area, Lee has been most interested in data analysis. She took computer-programming classes as an undergrad and has continued down that path in her graduate studies. Under the tutelage of Professor Gary McClelland, she’s developed her ability to organize, analyze and present data. She’s also learned to write more sophisticated programs. In Professor Akira Miyake’s lab, she had the opportunity to analyze data for large-scale grant projects, learning a variety of high-level analysis techniques that she otherwise might never have been exposed to. Lee will tell you that she cannot thank her mentors enough—Professors Akira Miyake, Yuko Munakata and Naomi Friedman—for their significant roles in helping her to develop her research skills.

Lee says she thrives on the problem solving aspect of data analysis. In fact, problem solving is what drew her to both physics and programming. “I enjoy having an overreaching goal composed of smaller problems to solve along the way,” she says. “It’s satisfying to work on something, feel confused about it at first, and then to have insights that lead to little victories. I really like the challenge.”

Speaking of challenges, Lee is in the process of completing her dissertation. Her research examines the extent to which genes versus the environment influence different aspects of memory (e.g., storing items in short-term memory and retrieving items from long-term memory).

Finishing her dissertation has become even more challenging since she started working full-time last year. She now wakes up early in the morning and makes a beeline to her favorite café, the Red Rock Coffeehouse in Boulder, so she can have time to write. From there, she heads to her job at SpotXchange. As Lee describes it, SpotXchange is an advertising technology company that does real-time bids for online video ads. Real-time bidding refers to the auction of online ads that begins the moment a video is clicked on. The auction is conducted automatically between multiple advertising companies during the few hundred milliseconds before the video begins. Advertisers set maximum bids based on a set of complex criteria for user profiles including geographic location, browsing history, and census information.

As a data scientist at SpotXchange, Lee crunches the data for this process. (She’s happy to point out that “data scientist” was recognized in 2013 by the Harvard Business Review as the sexiest job of the 21st century.) She uses the data analysis techniques she learned at CU to present complex marketing, revenue and auction information to her company, helping it determine its parameters of bidding. She also identifies and corrects any problems with the technology used in the auction process. Although her analytic skills were firmly in place when she started, she says she was clueless about real-time bidding: “I had no idea that all this stuff was going on behind the scenes until I started working here!”

Lee says she finds her job at SpotXchange especially satisfying because of the workplace environment. This year, the Denver Post named SpotXchange one of the top workplaces in Denver for the third year in a row. It’s the people that make it that way, she says. “Everyone there is excited about what they’re working on. They’re nerdy, which is good for me because I really like nerds. And they’re very good at what they do, so I’m constantly learning new skills from them.”

Lee’s last year as a graduate student has been bitter-sweet. She spends less time on campus these days and misses the camaraderie of her fellow doctoral students. She says she’ll always remember “going through classes together, going through the stresses together and then celebrating the victories together.”

Lee expects to complete her dissertation some time in the new year. For the time being, anyway, she’ll have to put her career as a rock star on hold. —Alicia Segal
Alumni News Updates

Alumni who sent us updates over the past year are listed below. You’ll find a full account of their news, as well as updates submitted by other alumni over the years, on our Alumni News website at http://psych.colorado.edu/alumni. Click on the “Alumni News” link. For login information, email psychology.news@colorado.edu

1960s
Vincent Campbell (PhD '60)
Georgeanne (Roxy) Richardson Herzog (MA '63)
Janet Fritz, PhD (BA '64)
John Shybut (PhD '65)
Sheldon Siegel, MPS (BA '65)
Jan Alexander (BA '69)

1970s
David Somers (BA '73)
Mark Fetler (PhD '77)
Janet Watson (BA '79, Psych & Communications)

1980s
Cheryl Sanchez-Ostapchenko, MA (BA '81)
Marcy Cooper, MD (MA '84)
Shari Deuschle, PharmD (BA '84)
William (Bill) Johnson (BA '86)
Pete Wassell (BA '86)
Jay S. Coggan, PhD (BA '87)
Jill Spivack, LCSW (BA '88)
Lisa Kippur, MA (BA '89)
Erin E. Maio-Harrison, MA (BA '89, Psych & CDSS)

1990s
Monika Fleshner, PhD (BA '90)
Robert Short, PhD (BA '90)
Kimberly Johnson Solveldt, MA (BA '90)
Russell Frohardt, PhD (BA '93)
Christopher Whyrick (BA '99)

2000s
Phil Boice, MS (BA '00)
Laura Sejul, PsyD (BA '04)
David Sullivan, MSW (BA '04)
Olga (Kwiecien) Jonas (BA '05)
Ben Rosenberg MA (BA '06)
Landon Mock, MA (BA '07)
Erika Rojas, MSW (BA '08)
Johanna Blumenthal, JD (BA '09)

2010s
Elizabeth Handing (BA '10)
Marquez Herrod (BA '10)
Rebecca Rose Frounsel (BA '11)
Laura Houd, MA (BA '11)
Zachary Millman (BA '11)
Ian Tolar (BA '11, Psych & Philosophy)

The Neurobiology of Learning and Memory

College Professor of Distinction Jerry W. Rudy has published a second edition of his textbook, *The Neurobiology of Learning and Memory*. It provides a synthesis that links psychological concepts and behavioral methods with mechanisms of synaptic plasticity and neuroscience to describe how memories are made. Each chapter makes the key concepts accessible to a reader with a minimal background in neurobiology and psychology and is extensively illustrated with full-color photographs and figures.

The book is organized into three parts. Part One introduces the idea that synapses modified by experience provide the basis for memory storage. It then describes how synaptic changes that support memories evolve in four overlapping stages referred to as (a) generation, (b) stabilization, (c) consolidation, and (d) maintenance. Part Two builds on this foundation to show how molecules and cellular processes that have been identified from studies of synaptic plasticity also participate in the making of memories. It discusses why some memories are stronger than others and how they can be erased. Part Three is organized around the multiple memory systems view—that different neural systems have evolved to store the content contained in our experience. It describes the neural systems that support (a) episodic memories—a medial-temporal cortico-hippocampal system, (b) actions and habits that enable us to adapt to the changing demands of the environment—a cortico-striatal system, and (c) the acquisition and removal of emotional fear memories—a cortico-amygdala system.
Professor Eugene S. Gollin passed away on April 5, 2014, at the age of 92. Born in 1921 in New York City, Gene is survived by his beloved wife of 63 years, Janet, by sister Rita, daughter Ann, sons David and Adam, and their families. After serving as a U.S. Army Air Force officer in World War II, Gene graduated from City College, New York, and received his PhD from Clark University in 1951. After several university appointments, Gene moved to the University of Colorado Boulder in 1968, and retired to Emeritus status in 1992. His edited volumes and numerous publications in developmental psychology were models of scientific clarity and theoretical expertise. Professor Gollin was a superb theorist and experimentalist, and he was also a superb teacher, inspiring both undergraduates and graduate students. He devoted many hours to advising his students; his encyclopedic knowledge of psychology, history, and philosophy served as a model of erudition for us, and his intellect and essential humanity were enormously inspirational. In his classes, and in the many hours outside of class he devoted to his students, Gene would speak with great erudition, humanity, and humor on practically every topic under the sun. He studied human beings across the lifespan, but his focus was not solely on the child, or the adult, but rather on the process and trajectory of development itself. He insisted that psychological theory be grounded not only in psychology per se, and not only in the arcana of brain function, but in the recognition that mentality and its neural substrate pass continually through both developmental and evolutionary trajectories. He taught always that the understanding of behavioral performance did not necessarily illuminate the processes leading to it; and his insistence on measuring psychological task demands against developmental characteristics illuminated many important psychological processes in his teaching and his published works.

His students, including the present writer, carry on his teaching and his research in classrooms and laboratories worldwide. Professor Eugene S. Gollin has departed; but as long as human beings teach and study the nature of development, his intellectual legacy will truly be immortal.

(Contributed by Matthew J. Sharps, PhD)

Our colleague, mentor, and good friend, Tom Landauer, died on March 26, 2014, after several years of a gradually debilitating illness. As all who knew him will agree, he was a most unusual person – a man of many pursuits. He was first and foremost a scientist, interested in just about everything that went on around him. He was an academician, but didn’t confine his work to the Ivory Tower. He could do precise experiments and build comprehensive theories, but he was equally committed to pragmatics – to demonstrating that what was discoverable in the laboratory had applications in the real world. He loved the environment and immersed himself in it. He was an inveterate hiker and skier, but also a man of the sea.

When the time came to leave home, Tom chose the University of Colorado as his place of study. One problem that Tom had in school was that he was interested in everything—music, art, history, science, mathematics—and he had a gift for all of them. He had trouble finding a place to focus but ended up with a dual major in psychology and anthropology. Tom graduated at the head of his class and, with guidance from his CU professors, moved on to Harvard University, for his PhD in social relations. After Harvard, he moved on to teaching positions at Dartmouth, Stanford, and Princeton. In the late ‘60’s, he accepted a research position at the Bell Labs (later Bellcore) in New Jersey. There, he flourished, spending 25 years doing basic research in human-computer interaction, human memory, and related cognitive processes.

When Tom let it be known that he was moving to Boulder to develop some practical educational applications of his invention Latent Semantic Analysis, it was a “no brainer” to offer him an appointment in the Psychology Department at CU. And thus, an important circle in his life was closed—CU undergraduate later in life becomes CU professor. Tom Landauer—scientist, scholar, teacher, outdoorsman, and sailor. There were few like him, and he will be sorely missed.

This is an abbreviated version of a longer In Memoriam article that can be found at http://psych.colorado.edu/news.html under the March 2014 heading. The full testimonial also appeared in CU’s Institute of Cognitive Science newsletter in Spring 2014.
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