

INSIGHTS

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

A Special Issue Dedicated to People Who Serve AT-RISK Children and Adults

When TIMES was established in 2002 as a university research center, the center grew out of collaborations between researchers at UH and The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. The choice of the name, Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics (TIMES) reflects the center's mission: to advance scientific discovery through the development and application of measurement, evaluation, and statistical research methods. Its goal is to improve the behavioral, psychological, educational, and developmental outcomes of children and adults through high quality, cutting-edge research methods and state-of-the-art statistical support services. Over the years, TIMES has become a model of a university research center, providing resources in measurement, evaluation, and statistics for faculty and administrators and having strong partnerships with academia, government, and public school systems.

The foundation of collaborations in the areas of education and developmental disabilities began 25 years ago at UH. The three collaborators were: David Francis, Ph.D.; Jack Fletcher, Ph.D. ABPP; and Barbara Foorman, Ph.D. In the late '80s, Dr. Fletcher moved to the Department of Pediatrics at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. In 1996, Dr. Foorman followed Dr. Fletcher to UT-Houston. Together, Drs. Foorman, Fletcher, and Francis established the Center for Academic and Reading Skills (CARS). CARS was originally conceived as a multi-institutional center, with Dr. Francis' group providing statistical and methodological expertise for joint research projects, but CARS identified more with UT-Houston. Consequently, Arthur Vailas, who was then VP/VC for Research, approached Francis about the creation of a university-wide research center at UH to reflect UH's role in the center and further the research enterprise at UH. In 2006, Dr. Fletcher joined UH as Professor of Psychology and continued his affiliation with TIMES. As a university-wide research

Looking Forward on TIMES 10th Anniversary



Co-founders of the Center for Academic and Reading Skills (CARS) from left, Jack Fletcher, Barbara Foorman, and David Francis, pictured in 2004

center, TIMES has fiscal authority within the university to manage research and core services, to hire staff and research faculty, to manage grants, and to build research infrastructure. The current administrative structure includes David Francis as Director and Coleen Carlson as Associate Director. All faculty within TIMES maintain faculty appointments in academic departments, including the Departments of Psychology, Educational Psychol-

ogy, Curriculum and Instruction, and Computer Science. TIMES includes both tenure-track and research faculty.

TIMES offers critical core services in the areas of design, analysis, measurement, and information management to primary researchers at UH and their collaborators, with a focus on educational and developmental research. TIMES also provides outreach services to school districts that are involved in educational reform and need evaluation of their reform efforts. Other service requests have come from non-profit entities in need of statistical and research services, such as Texas Children's Hospital, Blue Bird Clinic, Texas Women's University, and the Methodist Hospital Research Institute.

The primary way that TIMES generates revenue is through grant activity from the federal government, and to a lesser extent through contracts with the Texas Education Agency, school districts, and the US Department of Education.

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Learning Disabilities Research Center Focuses on Reading

UH's Department of Psychology is nationally recognized for a wide range of program projects and center grants focusing on researching, identifying, and serving at risk children and adults. Faculty who are leading experts in these fields train doctoral students to become practitioners and researchers serving populations with learning and behavioral issues. The research funding provides the infrastructure to allow the university to bridge the gap between higher education and the community, including organizations serving the at-risk student population. The research funding also contributes to the university's recognition as a Tier One research university. The Texas Center for Learning Disabilities (TCLD), one of four federally funded university centers, is based at UH and recently received a \$9 million competitive renewal grant from NIH to fund research to improve outcomes for children with learning disabilities in reading through a variety of approaches.

Since 2006, Jack M. Fletcher, Ph.D., ABPP, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Professor of Psychology, has led the multi-disciplinary Texas Center for Learning Disabilities. The TCLD evaluates approaches to identifying and treating children who struggle to learn to read. According to Dr. Fletcher, "the hallmark of proficient reading is the ability to abstract meaning from text. All instruction is in the service of improved reading comprehension." The TCLD also examines the cognitive and neural bases of reading problems, focusing specifically on children who are difficult to treat. The initial award of \$7 million for 2006-2011 was a center grant (called P50) from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). The purpose of the original grant was to develop new knowledge about identification, developmental courses, and intervention outcomes for children with learning disabilities (LDs). These studies focused on definition and measurement issues, intervention in preventative (1st grade) and remedial (middle school) models, and neurobiological correlates using magnetic source imaging.

The central theme of the first phase of the study reexamined the RTI (Response to Intervention) construct of LD and the identification of "unexpected underachievement" based on cognitive tests. "Response to Intervention represents a service delivery framework for enhancing reading, math, and behavioral outcomes for all children. It involves universal screening for reading, math, and behavior problems, progress monitoring of children who are at risk, and increasingly intense (tiered) interventions for those who struggle. Evidence of inadequate instructional response, a natural product of the RTI framework, is strong evidence of a learning disability," Dr. Fletcher explained. The project established a reliable and valid classification of LD, and systemically studied inadequate responders from instructional, neurobiological, and cognitive perspectives. The project also developed curricula for use as intervention in class rooms. The multi-disciplinary center also involved The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and The University of Texas-Austin, with researchers collaborating in neuropsychology, cognitive neuroscience, reading intervention, special education, and methodology.

The continuation of funding for the next five years will enable the center to focus on definition and measurement issues, executive functions, interventions addressing reading comprehension, and the neurobiological correlates of LD. According to Dr. Fletcher, "executive functions" are a set of cognitive control processes that help regulate learning and behavior. The accomplishments and impact on public schools from the previous five years research are evident in that "the research continues to highlight the importance of early intervention, showing that intensive intervention is required to remediate reading problems in older children," explained Dr. Fletcher.



*Jack M. Fletcher, Ph.D., ABPP
Director of TCLD*

The efforts will include field studies and computer-based simulation studies to examine the reliability and validity of classifications based on RTI. The new phase of the research will also look at the differences in executive function models from neuropsychological, cognitive neuroscience and educational perspectives, and examine the role of executive functions in reading comprehension intervention. A new intervention study will follow up the previous five years of intervention research with the inclusion of missing gap years, which are 4th and 5th grades. The study will follow 4th graders in Austin and Houston school districts with identified reading problems for two years and introduce executive functions as intervention elements. Neuroimaging technology will continue to be a component of the research program, which can evaluate structural and functional correlates of intervention response. Based on the previous study, participation in intervention can alter the neural network between visual and language centers of the brain that mediate reading. UH's collaborators include: Dr. Amy Barth, Dr. Paul Cirino, Dr. David Francis, and Dr. Karla Stuebing. UT-Austin's collaborators are Dr. Greg Roberts and Dr. Sharon Vaughn. UTHSC's Houston collaborators are Dr. Marcia Barnes and Jennifer Juranek.

by Lolin Wang-Bennett

Prominent Researcher in Health Behaviors Joins UH Faculty

Dr. Michael Zvolensky, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished University Professor, is a new hire in the Clinical Psychology program of the Department of Psychology. He moved his NIH funded research lab from the University of Vermont to the University of Houston in September 2011. He was interviewed by L Wang-Bennett, Director of Advancement, to share his thoughts on his transition to Houston, his new role as a distinguished university professor and his new directions in research.

Dr. Zvolensky grew up in the Northeast U.S. and led a very healthy athletic life in college and throughout his professional career. The majority of his extended family lives in central and western NY. While he was an undergraduate at SUNY, Buffalo, majoring in psychology, he was a competitive swimmer and participated in Physiology Professor, David Pendergast's exercise physiology studies. He spent most of his young professional life in central New York and New England. He received his doctoral degree in clinical psychology from West Virginia University in 2001 and completed his pre-doctoral internship at Brown University Medical School. He built a highly successful research and teaching career and ascended to professorship at the University of Vermont within the last 10 years. Moving down to the south had some personal appeal to him since he enjoys triathlons, and biking year round is a big bonus. He has generally adjusted to the difference in the weather and has no complaints of the warm climate. He has settled in Houston's Heights neighborhood and likes the beautiful tree canopy and enjoys the opportunity to walk to nearby restaurants/bars/bike paths.

He has fully embraced the three main areas which define the role of a distinguished endowed faculty: broaden course offerings, spearhead new research, and increase community outreach.

He is teaching a graduate level seminar course on translational research, called Translational Theory and Research, a course with special relevance to psychopathology. The course is new in the department, and he is learning how the course fits into the existing curricula. He hopes the theme can bridge basic and applied research and provide a platform for student growth in clinical science. This elective course also allows students to inform each other and organize their thoughts about their own professional development in regard to research. This course will benefit graduate students who want to cultivate a certain line of research that is unique to them, to further develop a career plan, to create a scholarly theme, or to explore critical thinking.

He is an expert on anxiety disorders and has published extensively, over 300 peer-reviewed articles, and written two books. He has been highly cited on his research on the relationship between anxiety and addiction. Consistent with the translational program, he is doing human basic research that is directly applied to prevention and treatment. The groups he has been working with are mostly difficult-to-treat populations – some have anxiety and co-occurrence with substance abuse and visible health disorders. One area he is very excited about is exercise as a health promotion tactic for mental health. It can also change severe substance abuse issues and promote general well-being. Currently, we tend to rely on traditional pharmacological driven therapy and psychological driven therapy and underutilize other health promotion tactics such as exercise. He has a number of grants in the area of anxiety, stress, and response to medication. Dr. Zvolensky is increasingly extending his work with the HIV and AIDS population, looking at roles of anxiety, stress, and tobacco in HIV and AIDS symptoms expression, in medicated patients. He is working on an area that dovetails nicely with community outreach. He has developed a relationship with the Legacy Community Health Services, an integrated community health cen-



Dr. Michael Zvolensky

ter who serves, in part, HIV & AIDS positive individuals. Working with the Legacy Foundation and one of its clinics in Montrose, with a member of his research team (graduate student Chad Brandt), Dr. Zvolensky is developing a target intervention strategy for the HIV & AIDS population. One of the studies involves exercise in the gym there. The project is at the beginning stage.

For his laboratory at UH, his team has set up a number of lines of research and will continue to focus on the role of tobacco in anxiety disorders, stress related problems, and anxiety risk factors in the maintenance of tobacco use. They just obtained a grant from the National Institute of Drug Abuse with Dr. Peter Norton, Associate Professor of Psychology, to develop a treatment for tobacco users with anxiety disorders. The proposed transdiagnostic Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) will target all kinds of anxiety disorder issues. The transdiagnostic

CBT can be used for different groups, fields, and processes, and it will be cost efficient for the health care system. "If the core processes that are involved in the etiology of anxiety and the maintenance of this condition can be isolated, we can teach individuals the tactics that can be applicable to the individual situations of worry or principle concerns."

Dr. Zvolensky is currently supported by six different grants, with collaborators in Massachusetts, Louisiana, and Dallas (SMU). A grant of special interest is for World Trade Center (WTC) first responders, who exhibit a host of symptoms, i.e. upper and lower respiratory disorders or post traumatic stress disorder, and who have not been followed closely. Five federally funded programs formed a consortium of providers in New York, including: Bellevue Hospital, Mount Sinai Medical Center, Nassau County University Medical Center, Queens College Ground Zero Health Watch, and SUNY-Stony Brook, to monitor medical conditions, address anxiety/stress, and provide treatment programs. Police, firefighters, ambulance workers, or volunteers were the majority of the first responders. The stories they told were heart-breaking. Their situation is unique scientifically: the mix of contaminations, air pollutants, psychological and medical issues, and the environmental catastrophe. Dr. Zvolensky is part of the Long Island component of the project. New trials are also underway for anxiety disorders and smokers who are sedentary. He applies very intense physical exercise to address their mood disturbance to facilitate their ability to quit more successfully. That project is running here and at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas.

Fortunately, he has a great team to work with, including great graduate students and a postdoc. He still engages with people in Vermont, some graduate students, and research professors. He is expecting one more graduate student from Vermont to arrive in the summer. With other new hires arriving in the department, more opportunities will arise. He has an adjunct position with MD Anderson Cancer Center and collaboration is also possible with other TMC groups. When he looks back at the deciding factors for his move to Houston, he believes Houston has a diverse community, and a huge underserved population. Right now his priority is to settle down and get the lab in focus. He is expecting 2 to 3 studies to be launched in mid to late summer 2012. By September, 2012, the anniversary of his move, he expects to be in full swing.

New Center Focuses on Kid's Sleep and Anxiety

Dr. Candice Alfano, previously the Director of the Child and Adolescent Anxiety Program at Children's National Medical Center and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Behavioral Medicine and Pediatrics at George Washington University School of Medicine, recently moved to Houston to join UH as an Associate Professor in Clinical Psychology and Director of the Sleep and Anxiety Center for Kids (SACK).



Dr. Candice Alfano, director of the new Sleep and Anxiety Center for Kids demonstrates how children at the center use a wrist bracelet that measures sleep. (Photo credit: Thomas Campbell)

SACK is part of the Psychology Research and Services Center (PRSC), a mental health clinic at UH designed for advancing the clinical psychology doctoral program's research and training mission and providing empirically-based assessment and treatment services to the community at low-cost.

Anxiety and sleep problems are both common and inter-related affecting an estimated 30% of all

youth. These issues can present complex behavioral and emotional challenges for families and increase the likelihood that children will develop other problems and disorders later in life. Dr. Alfano's current research program focuses on the role of sleep in the development and trajectory of childhood anxiety. She points out that, "For some children, problems sleeping at night can appear after the experience of an acute stressor. Still, in other children, causal factors are less clear, and sleep problems can persist for years in the absence of intervention services."

Alfano also states that teenagers, as a group, are at high risk for chronically inadequate sleep based on biologically-driven circadian changes that typically occur with the onset of puberty. She explains that there is a shift in the circadian phase that makes adolescents want to stay up later at night. This shift can result in great difficulty awakening for school in the morning. "Some families will seek help because there is conflict at home, calls from the school, or truancy concerns. We try to explain these underlying biological changes and point out that it is not completely the teen's fault that they want to go to bed later at night and then can't get up in the morning," Dr. Alfano explained.

Dr. Alfano is also interested in REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, which is commonly known as dreaming sleep. She explains that different information is processed during REM vs. non-REM sleep. "REM sleep is most closely associated with the processing of emotional information. Meaningful events that happen to us throughout the course of our day get re-processed into memory during REM sleep periods. Alterations in normal REM sleep patterns are consistently found in individuals with psychiatric disorders and disorders that include negative emotionality." REM sleep is important for anxiety and depression.

Dr. Alfano came to specialize in sleep disorders in somewhat of an accidental fashion. She had been studying childhood anxiety and working with anxious children for several years when she observed that most of the children she worked with had terrible sleep. However, sleep problems were not assessed and seldom even mentioned in many of the clinical settings in which she received her training. Moreover, when she looked to previous research to guide the specific intervention strategies she should use, her search turned up empty.

Based on a few small studies she subsequently conducted, focused on the sleep of anxious children, Dr. Alfano was eventually awarded a Mentored Career Development Award from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to begin to fill some of these research gaps. One requirement of this type of award is close mentorship from senior scientists. She sought out mentorship from Dr. Thomas Mellman at the Howard University School of Medicine, who studies sleep disturbances in patients with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She conducted the first 2.5 years of her 5-year NIMH award at Children's National Medical Center in Washington D.C. before coming to UH. She has also sought out mentorship from a local senior scientist, Dr. Daniel Glaze at Texas Children's Hospital, who serves as an additional mentor on the project.

Based on the overall small number of pediatric sleep specialists that exist, some of Dr. Alfano's more recent research projects focus on the dissemination of evidence-based practices for sleep problems. For one project, she is developing a web-based intervention program for children with sleep problems using empirically-based behavioral methods for improving sleep. She has paired with a technology-based company specializing in tele-medicine and virtual reality methods to create a child-friendly, interactive, online program for kids who are struggling with sleep. Another project is dedicated to better understanding how the deployment of a parent affects children's sleep and emotional functioning in military families. She hopes to develop an informed preventive intervention for veterans and their families aimed at increasing family cohesion and coping during periods of increased stress and separation.

Dr. Alfano is co-author of the book, "Child Anxiety Disorders: A guide to Research and Treatment" and a co-editor of another book, "Social Anxiety Disorder in Adolescents and Young Adults: Translating Developmental Science into Practice." She is currently working on another edited book that will provide a review of evidence-based psychosocial interventions for children with various psychiatric disorders and problems including, of course, sleep disorders.

by Lolin Wang-Bennett

TIMES 10th Anniversary

Cont'd from Pg 1

Over the last 5 fiscal years (2007-2011), TIMES received federal funds for projects in assessment and professional development activities. These projects rigorously test and validate the effectiveness of interventions for use with English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities at the elementary, middle, and high-school levels. These activities are conducted through two major national center grants awarded to TIMES and Psychology faculty. One center grant was awarded to TIMES to create the Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE), the only National Research and Development Center for ELLs funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the US Department of Education. Another center grant award in 2006 created the Texas Center for Learning Disabilities (TCLD), which is a national learning disabilities research center funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). A competitive renewal of the TCLD was awarded by NICHD in 2011, providing an additional five years of funding. TCLD is one of four national learning disabilities research centers funded by NICHD.

In addition to these two federally funded center grants, the team at TIMES was recently funded by IES as part of the Reading for Understanding Network. The RFU network is comprised of research teams at UH, UT-Houston, UT-Austin, Texas A&M University, and Florida State University. The research team involving TIMES is focused on reading comprehension among middle and high school students. Other specific research projects are supported by grants from IES and NICHD, including a recently funded IES Goal 4 effectiveness trial focused on early reading interventions for ELLs. In the past, TIMES has also collaborated on NICHD funded program project grants on math disabilities and spina bifida. The latter was a long-term study involving genetic, neuroimaging, and neuropsychological factors in spina bifida directed by Dr. Fletcher.

TIMES also recently began a line of research with middle school teachers, examining teacher stress and its impact on teacher health, job performance, and student learning. The project team is led by Dr. Teresa McIntyre, a clinically trained health psychologist who is a research professor at TIMES.

TIMES' Impact:

Over the past 5 years, TIMES has served 290 districts, 1,179 campuses, and impacted approximately 474,578 students. These include districts, campuses, and students in Texas as well as several other states and a "district" in Guadalajara, Mexico. The campus and student counts contain some overlap due to the involvement of some schools and students in multiple projects.

Landmark Accomplishments over the past 25 years:

- * Collected statewide data on early identification and intervention of reading problems.
- * CARS researchers at UH and UT-Houston developed the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)[®] to meet the state requirement of early diagnostic assessment in K-2 classrooms across Texas.
- * Researchers at TIMES developed the assessment in Spanish Tejas Lee[®] for grades K-3 to meet the legislative requirement for students learning to read in Spanish.
- * Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, faculty members at TIMES and the TCLD developed successful programs to advance early literacy in English and Spanish and mathematics.
- * CREATE was funded by a Department of Education IES grant in partnership with the Center for Applied Linguistics and UT-Austin, UC Berkeley, Harvard, and Cal State Long Beach to test and validate the effectiveness of science-based interventions. Its focus is on literacy and English language development of Spanish-speaking elementary and middle school students.
- * Since 1997, TIMES has established a strong relationship with the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo through its involvement with the Rodeo Institute for Teacher Excellence (RITE). TIMES provided scientific measurement of the delivery of effective reading instruction and provided reading interventions in Houston public school systems to close the academic achievement gap and prevent high dropout rates.
- * Recently, a separate English language reading assessment for middle school students has been developed. The assessment is currently available for free to the public by TEA (copyright co-holder) while the license is processed.

TIMES requires private support for infrastructure to provide outreach services to school districts involved in educational reform. Often, these reforms are in the pilot stage and need support for proper evaluation efforts before implementation.

TIMES is undertaking fundraising efforts to support the creation of the Texas Consortium for High Risk Children. The purpose is to facilitate collaboration across Houston's Institutions in the Texas Medical Center (TMC) to meet the health and education needs of high-risk children. TIMES faculty, Drs. Jack Fletcher and David Francis, were recently awarded a gift from a private family fund to support the newly created Consortium. The fundraising will further impact students, practitioners, and administrators, and will link with similar programs in the TMC, TEA, and other institutions across the nation. The consortium will play an increasingly important role in training the next generation of scientists. Priorities are recruiting faculty, training the best graduate and undergraduate students, and disseminating findings effectively to practitioners. These are the program areas which will need sustainable funding sources.

A new building, the Health and Biomedical Sciences Center (HBSC) was opened in late 2012. The center is designed to be an integrated research space to allow faculty from several areas of behavioral neuroscience to have new opportunities for collaboration. The building houses TIMES and computational scientists from the college of Natural Sciences and Mathematics on the third floor. Upon completion of the fourth floor in 2013-2014, the building will contain the research infrastructure for investigators in neuropsychology, neuroscience, and biomedical engineering to join TIMES and the computational scientists in conducting complex systems research that will further enhance TIMES capacity to serve public school systems and to compete for federal research grants.

Distinguished Alumni

The Life of a Dedicated Altruist and Author of the Book “The Hitting Habit: Anger Control for Battering Couples”

Her decades-long dedication in working with at-risk children and their mothers, battering couples, homeless, and so on touched many lives wherever she happened to live.

Dr. Jeanne Deschner's early career started in 1950 in NY Harlem, a predominantly African American neighborhood in the New York City borough of Manhattan. After college, for one year, she worked at a community center as a camp program director and was responsible for recruiting the staff of college students. Her job entailed screening at-risk children from NY social service agencies for the 8-wk camp program. Afterwards, she went to the Union Theological Seminary for 2 years and majored in systematic theology. During that time she met a handsome young man, Roger Deschner, at seminary school, and they married. He later decided to pursue a career as a church musician and collected another master's degree in choral direction while the family grew to have four children. The family then moved to Chickasha, Oklahoma. Dr. Jeanne Deschner took a job at her husband's Oklahoma church as Director of Christian Education, a job in which she served as a volunteer recruiter, hired daycare workers, and developed a community diversion program for juvenile offenders.

In 1961, her husband was promoted to be the Minister of Music of the First Methodist Church in Houston. While she was in Houston, she decided to take a counseling course at the University of Houston just for fun, and after just one course she fell absolutely in love with psychology. In the following 7 years, while she took care of her family, she took just about every psychology course that was offered. She took courses in clinical psychology and finished a master's degree in counseling psychology, and then in her forties, she applied to become a doctoral candidate in the Educational Psychology program. Educational Psychology was then a doctoral program within the Department of Psychology. Her dissertation mentor was Dr. Dale Johnson, the third Chairman of UH's Department of Psychology. In 1972 she finished her doctoral degree in Educational Psychology and did her clinical internship at the Children's Mental Health Center of Houston the following year.

After completing her Ph.D., she was appointed as a visiting assistant professor at the newly formed UH Graduate School of Social Work and taught for 3 years. During those years she was actively involved in the Houston community and began researching model programs that could address the needs and problems of at-risk children in Houston. She found a model behavior modification program started at the University of Kansas, and Dr. Deschner as the President and a founder worked along with a group of Houston citizens to form the Houston Achievement Place (HAP) in 1974. HAP was a residential program featuring behavior modification- using positive reinforcement to change the life of troubled children referred by a social services agency.

In 1975, when Dr. Deschner's husband took a position as professor and director of the Sacred Music Program at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, she and the family went along. It was hard for her to leave friends and her established career and community work behind. For the first year after they moved, she flew back to Houston many times whenever a problem arose



Dr. Jeanne Deschner

nearly closed Houston Achievement Place. The income from the thrift shop immediately stabilized HAP's finances. Years later in 1992, Dr. Deschner was honored as founder of HAP.

Until 1991, Dr. Deschner was on the faculty of the Graduate School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Arlington. She taught courses in treatment of family violence, family therapy, treatment of alcoholism and other addictions, and advanced level courses in comparative treatment modalities and psychotherapy methods. She started three social agencies for treating victims of domestic violence, and was the founder of the Anger Control Training Program at the Community Service Clinic at the School of Social Work. From these experiences, she authored a book, titled "Hitting Habit: Anger Control for Battering Couples," based on cognitive behavior therapy. She believed that abusive behavior is learned and can be modified by treatment and learning to handle anger. She also found that women kept going back to their abusers. The best success, according to her experience, was achieved when she taught women as well as men.

After her husband passed away, Dr. Deschner retired and returned to Colorado. Just for fun, she began volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, building houses for the homeless. She learned to use tools and began to teach other volunteers and prospective home owners how to build houses. She served the Habitat for Humanity as President. She was honored as national volunteer of the year in 2004.

Dr. Jeanne Deschner reflects on her times at UH both as a graduate student and young faculty. She is surprised as she looked back at how influential her doctoral training was on her subsequent thinking and how it helped shape her teaching, career, community service, therapy practice, and even her private life in raising her children. Specifically, she has identified herself as a behavior modification and group therapist ever since she took classes at UH, and throughout the years she has dedicated herself to services to community organizations. Now that she is an invalid because of the effect of ALS, she is studying quiet meditation and giving thanks for all the blessings that have opened up since she decided to take a psychology course, just for fun, at UH.

by Lolin Wang-Bennett

From Industrial-Organizational Psychology Training to Application in Organizational Development

The years of Phi Slama Jama, a nickname of the University of Houston Cougars men's basketball teams from 1982-1984, are a fond memory for students and Houstonians. Those years stand out in Ms. Pamela S. Birk's memory. Growing up in a small town in Missouri and living away from home for the first time, Birk came to UH's large campus which had a population about three times that of her hometown. Her college experience was eye-opening. She learned new things every day, enjoyed the faculty, and loved being on campus. She developed terrific friendships with her peers. Two decades later, she still maintains many of those relationships. As a psychology major, one could be drawn into all kinds of fields. For her, she had a clear interest in HR type courses, so she took every Industrial-Organizational Psychology course she could. Course wise, she advanced from the Introduction to Psychology to the Statistics, Abnormal Psychology, and Industrial-Organizational courses including: I/O Psychology, Selecting Employees, HR Relations, and Organizational Change and Development. At the time the department had several top-notch I/O psychology faculty, including Arvey, Bullock, Campion, and Jones. For two years, Birk worked as a research assistant with Dr. R. J. Bullock, whose specialty was in employee management and satisfaction and was undertaking research in workforce engagement. This gave her the conceptualization of an I/O psychology career when she graduated from UH with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology.

It has been twenty some years since she graduated, and in the intervening years she studied at Houston Baptist University and obtained a MS degree in Health Administration and an MBA degree at UH in 2004. She received a Human Resource Management certificate from NYU and is affiliated with a number of leadership and management associations. In a recent campus visit to UH she felt a lot of energy, excitement, and enthusiasm. Students may change, but the feel of the campus remains the same. The sheer size of the current campus struck her as the biggest change.

After graduation, she worked for the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies in the Personal Lines Division. Targeting an affluent market, the company has an appraisal unit for the homes it insures. The job was to make sure that if someone had a loss on a multi-million dollar home, the insurance coverage would be appropriate. To be qualified for this job, a person needs to understand custom construction, design, and any other specialty features that add substantiality to the value of the home. Being flexible and adaptable with good communication skills to talk to home owners, business managers, or caretakers, and making others comfortable with the process were assets in this role.

Over the next several years, Birk moved through the leadership ranks, with responsibility for the Appraisal Units in several multistate regions. She then joined HR, where she could directly apply concepts learned in I/O psychology. This began her Organizational Development career. With her health administration training, she worked for St. Luke's Episcopal Health System as Director of Organizational Development before moving into her current role with the Friedkin Companies, Inc.

As the Senior Manager of Organizational Development at the Friedkin Companies, Inc., (Gulf States Toyota), her work impacts a number of areas. Many of her activities are intended to drive increased engagement within each business unit. She is also called on for coaching: individual coaching, team coaching, and executive coaching. Talent management is another area of importance in Birk's role, including individual and team performance results and succession planning. Successful organizational development is collaborative and future-oriented. Through OD, organizations can improve effectiveness, achieve goals, build capacity, and creatively manage challenges and change. Birk's role presents challenges, but it is very enjoyable. The advantage of having a robust talent development program is reflected in benefits to both the individual and the company.



Pamela S. Birk

From a performance assessment standpoint, the organization uses competency based 360 evaluation. "For each of our job roles, we have competencies that we feel are essential to possess to be successful in the role. 360 means you are getting feedback from above, below, sideways, and all around to give you varying perspectives of your performance. We use the Lominger Leadership Architect® Suite for competency modeling. We use the 360 results for performance trending and very specifically for developmental assignments and activities. We try to understand the person and his/her strengths and skill gaps to inform us as to where development needs to target," Birk explained.

For behavior assessment the organization uses The Birkman Method®, developed by Birkman International, founded by UH Psychology alum, Dr. Roger W. Birkman. The Birkman is used as part of the assessment process from a behavioral or personality perspective. It is often used for individual coaching, for the person to understand their behaviors—effective and ineffective and how their immediate environment impacts their behavior choices. From understanding self, an individual is better able to understand his or her impact on the team of which they are a member.

Birk stays connected with her alma mater. She is a faithful alum, receives alumni communications, including the Psychology alumni newsletter, and has been on the HR Development Advisory Board in UH's College of Technology for three years. The board advises on curriculum development, and Birk mentors students based on her organization development experience.

The general advice Birk offers to current students draws from her real world experience. She states: "If you are interested in Organizational Development, it is critically important to make an inroad into an organization; establishing a network is very important. Internships, volunteer work, everything you do to gain entry to an organization is helpful. Working with senior leadership in an organization requires one to understand the business, to think strategically, to have the ability to drive change, to have influence, and to be credible. It is quite possible for an individual to come into OD from a business unit outside of the HR department so long as they have the aptitude and a history of exceptional performance."

In August 2011 three long serving psychology faculty members retired and became emeritus professors. At the Department retirement party honoring these three professors, the department purchased 3 books representing each of their fields for the library with nameplates placed in the front to honor their contributions. The following three profiles highlight these faculty's professional contributions and colleagues' personal reflections.

Professor Emeritus Richard I. Evans

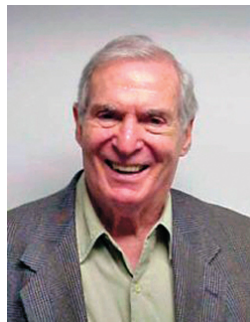
Dr. Richard Evans has been a great credit to the Department of Psychology and the University of Houston. He has served the department as Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished University Professor and Director of the Social Psychology/Behavioral Medicine Research Group. He began the social psychology program in the department in 1950 after completing his Ph.D. at Michigan State University. He has been a fixture in the department and UH for six decades, and he recently became professor emeritus in August, 2011.

The list of Dr. Evans' accomplishments is long. His significant contributions to the history of psychology were his widely-distributed filmed dialogues with world-renowned psychologists Carl Jung, Henry Murray, Gardner Murphy, Raymond Cattell, Erich Fromm, Erik Erikson, Carl Rogers, Jean Piaget, Konrad Lorenz, Albert Bandura, Rollo May, Gordon Allport, B.F. Skinner, and others. He taught the nation's first university television course and made many media appearances including guest appearances on ABC's 20/20, NBC's Tonight Show, and Today Show. A pioneer in behavioral medicine and health psychology, particularly with respect to tobacco prevention, he authored the 1979 U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Smoking in Children and Adolescents. He also contributed to lasting innovations in adolescent substance use prevention. His work on social inoculation led to resistance skills training approaches which are in wide use in many current prevention programs.

Beyond Dr. Evans' contributions to science, Dr. Clayton Neighbors, a former student who is now a Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Houston, remembers his generosity, his passion, and his commitment to others. "Evans is one of the few remaining who put his life on the line for his country in World War II, in the fighting infantry of Patton's third army. After the war, he completed his Ph.D. and joined UH. Since then, Evans generously made many opportunities for others over the years, with jobs, funding, publication opportunities, etc. He has always been generous in sharing sound and sincere advice based on his wealth of experience. I have always found him to be approachable and encouraging in many domains."

Evans' productivity is hard to match. He has had very extensive funding with numerous grants from multiple institutes, including the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Ford Foundation. He has published 20 books and over 300 research papers and professional articles.

"In the field of Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine, Dick's commitment really put UH on the map," remarked Dr. Neighbors. He continued, "I am personally grateful for his commitment to the department and especially to the social psychology program, which would not exist were it not for his commitment over many years. I personally appreciated his grant writing class, which I took as a graduate student, and the resulting paper that opened the door for a postdoc and subsequent productive research program in prevention. I am personally grateful to Dick for his encouragement and helpful advice in thinking about program direction. I am grateful for the opportunity to be working with him on a chapter reviewing extensions of his pioneering work on social inoculation."



Dr. Richard Evans

Throughout his career, he received many awards, including: the 1980 UH's Esther Farfel Award; the 1992 APA Award for Outstanding Contributions to Health Psychology; Distinguished Psychologist Awards from the Texas Psychological Association and the Texas Psychological Foundation; the Award of Excellence from the National Association of Community Health Centers for his model community adolescent health promotion project; the National Media Award from the American Psychological Foundation for his book "Gordon Allport: The Man and His Ideas."

Dr. Evans has been an ever present figure in the department, helping to shape our department into what it is today. His influences on the department have been foundational and will be present for many years to come. At the department retirement party, people thanked him for his years of service to the department and to the University of Houston.

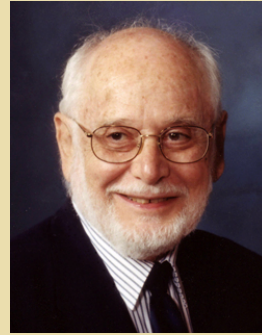
(Excerpted from Dr. C. Neighbors reflections at the retirement party honoring emeritus professors)

Faculty Legacy Fund

The Department would like to start a FACULTY LEGACY FUND with support from Psychology Alumni and friends. The purpose is to raise awareness about challenges of sustaining the quality of education for future students. The goal is to endow new undergraduate and graduate scholarships. If you are interested in making a commitment, please contact the Director of Advancement @ 713-743-8522. Lwang-bennett@uh.edu

Professor Emeritus Roy Lachman

Dr. Roy Lachman, who served in the US Merchant Marine and Army Transportation Service, remembers his participation in World War II as a momentous and formative period in his life. He portrayed the citizens of the US as united, generous, and self-sacrificing in the midst of the most destructive and barbarous war in human history. His war time experience and thoughtful observations of the philosophies and political changes of those times were transformational for his perspective about world problems. For his service in the WW2 Merchant Marine, he was awarded the Atlantic, Pacific, and Mediterranean War Zone medals and the Philippines Liberation medal.



Dr. Roy Lachman

Before he joined UH as a Cognitive Psychology faculty member in 1974, he had been on faculty at the University of Hawaii and Johns Hopkins, and had begun to teach a psychology theory/philosophy of science course at SUNY Buffalo and the University of Kansas. In his Psychology Theory course, he characterized the history and philosophy of science and how the science paradigm will lead to a revolutionary change within a changing society. He helped students grasp a perspective about the directions that methodology might take us forward. He educated many generations of students during his 55 year teaching career.

While he taught at the University of Hawaii, through the support of a federal research grant, Lachman examined human behavior during the Hawaii tsunami of May, 1960, and published the landmark study in *Science* in 1961 on why people ignored the warnings and decided not to evacuate. The more recent 2004 Great Sumatra earthquake and tsunami also triggered his interest to look at human sensory experience and response to disaster and the impact of the tsunami on coastal communities in Thailand. The research on sensory responses of tsunami and earthquake in North Borneo was supported by the National Science Foundation. He authored one book, *Cognitive Psychology and Information Processing*, and co-authored *Information Technology and Psychology, Prospects for the Future*.

Dr. Roy Lachman has also been recognized for his strong commitment to trying to make society and the world a better place. He first co-taught the Introduction to Cognitive Psychology course with Dr. Janet Lachman, a psycholinguist, in 1979. Later, Janet obtained her Doctor of Jurisprudence (JD) degree and left UH. What became their mutual interest was a devotion to programs for the protection of abused children. Over the past decade, they developed a UH course, Community Service Practica. The students interned at Justice for Children (JFC) in Houston. JFC works with parents or guardians who believe that their child is a victim of abuse. A subset of the protective parents becomes entangled in a bureaucratic nightmare of errors, agencies working at cross purpose and indifference that leads to a failure of child protection. JFC counsels the protective parent and acts as ombudsman with government agencies and the legal system. The 30 interns from the UH Psychology Department, each year, are supervised by in-house social workers, an attorney, and a business person.

At the department retirement party in August 2011, Dr. Carl Scott, Lachman's former graduate student and Associate Professor at the Department of Psychology at the University of St. Thomas, honored his mentor and remarked: "I was always curious to hear from Roy about his research. To my knowledge, he has been involved in the following applied research projects: tsunami warnings in Hawaii, memory and aging, decision making models of child protection, and tsunami warnings in Thailand. All of these might be grouped under Disaster Mitigation." Dr. Scott summed up, "In his research, he tried to apply psychological science to improve disaster warnings, whether about tsunamis or about potential for child abuse."

by Lolin Wang-Bennett

Professor Emeritus Gordon Paul

Treating and Assessing the Severely Mentally Ill

Gordon Paul was serious in music and played tenor saxophone as a kid. He reached adult height when he was 13 years old and worked very early on in traveling dance bands and jazz groups. He grew up in a large extended family, many of whom were involved with music, some professionally. In these early school years he was hardly aware that the discipline of psychology existed. He auditioned for, and gained admission to the U.S. Naval School of Music in the 1950s to simultaneously fulfill his military obligation and to further his career in music. As a contract musician in the U.S. Navy he went through vigorous instruction, practice, rehearsals, and performances. A buildup of anxiety with a combination of illness and pressure led to a surprise failure in his graduation performance exam. This trauma would later give him empathic appreciation of the powerful effect of anxiety on performance. The choice of psychology as a career came slowly when the four year stint with Navy music ended on assignment with the Great Lakes show band whose travel schedule was unfavorable to a good family life with wife Jo and two kids with a third one on the way.



Dr. Gordon Paul

He entered University of Iowa with tuition covered by the GI Bill and majored in psychology and minored in mathematics. Paul made a commitment to the predominant psychodynamic approaches of the time and to a clinical career rather than research. He obtained his doctoral degree in clinical psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1964, and after one year of postdoctoral training at the VA Hospital in Palo Alto/Menlo Park, CA, he returned to the University of Illinois as a faculty member in the Department of Psychology.

During his 15 years at University of Illinois, he established his research in anxiety related problems, systematic desensitization, and applied behavior techniques. Before Paul joined UH, he and his colleagues had studied three treatment approaches for severely mentally ill and institutionalized populations and completed comparative treatment research. The result was published as a landmark in evidence-based research, and advocated a comprehensive treatment program called the Social-Learning Program. The National Institute of Mental Health Science Report, compiled by L J Rhoades, became the widely cited source of Gordon Paul's publications. The booklet, titled "Treating and Assessing the Chronically Mentally Ill," documents Paul's years of research in preparing the severely mentally ill to function in community settings.

As a graduate student and later an intern, W. Edward Craighead was co-mentored by Dr. Gordon Paul and Dr. Leonard Ullmann during the development of the treatment manuals. "Gordon oversaw the entire project with several psychologists, social workers, and nurses writing the materials," recalled Dr. Craighead, J. Rex Fuqua Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Department of Psychology at Emory University. Craighead also appreciated how Dr. Paul motivated him to catch up at the beginning of his graduate level psychopathology course since he had not had an abnormal psychology course as an undergraduate.

A major change in the history of the University of Houston's Clinical Psychology program took place in the late '70s when UH identified Psychology as one of five departments for expansion. Dr. Roger Maley was recruited as Department of Psychology Chair. From 1978-1984, he recruited faculty with an explicit focus on solving applied problems. Dr. Maley brought in Marco Mariotto, Lynn Rehm, Len Ullmann and Gordon Paul to join Dale Johnson and John Vincent, forming a stellar group of clinical psychologists that contributed to the department's "most improved" national ratings. These faculty members all specialized in adult problems.

When Gordon Paul joined UH in 1980, an incentive was to establish a service-research-training model center at Austin State Hospital. The plan was to implement his findings at the Austin State Hospital as well as in Florida. To his great disappointment, after two years, political problems resulted in the agreements being terminated. Dr. Paul and his collaborators turned to completing their observational assessment materials into a "stand-alone" science-based assessment technology.

This critical element of Paul's institutional research program involved developing computerized assessment systems for tracking client behavior and staff interventions in psychosocial programs and for providing feedback for clinical staff in order to ensure improved treatment approaches. He and his colleagues, Mark Licht, Tony Menditto, and Marco Mariotto, have worked with several state mental health hospitals to develop the computerized assessment system. It combined two instruments, the Staff-Resident Interaction Chronograph (SRIC) and the Time-Sample Behavioral Checklist (TSBC), to provide a comprehensive program called the Computerized TSBC/SRIC Planned Access Observational Information System. An additional system, the Clinical Frequencies Recording System (CFRS), was tailored specifically to the Social-Learning Program to record the frequency of specific events that are not adequately covered by time-sampling. Paul is adamant that the Social-Learning Treatment Program and the supporting assessment systems are the most cost-efficient and cost-effective systems for mental health care.

During his academic appointments he continued a private practice with individual clients and consulted for hospitals and research agencies. Gerald Davison, Professor of Psychology and Gerontology of the University of Southern California, remembers Dr. Paul: "Beyond the substance of his pioneering research with the severely mentally ill, Gordon is the best exemplar I know of the scientist-professional model." Dr. Davison also complimented Paul for "his quiet, calm strength of character, keen analytical mind, imposing presence yet kind and empathic personality." The two have known each other since they overlapped at the end of Dr. Paul's internship at the Palo Alto VA. Dr. Davison continued: "I learned more shadowing him for that month than I did during the rest of my internship. We have been good friends ever since."

Dr. Paul was the Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished University Chair and Director of Clinical Research before he retired in 2011. He has remained as Professor Emeritus, where he and his research group, including local members Marco Mariotto and graduate students, Alicia Pardee and J. Leigh Noblin, are completing materials for widespread implementation of their evidence-based assessment and treatment procedures. Dr. Paul received many honors and recognitions from psychology organizations during his stellar career.

Colleagues Establish Memorial Fund for Dr. Patricia Averill



Dr. Mary Patricia Averill, who was a Clinical Psychology alumna from 1993, passed away in December 2010. Through the encouragement and generous support of Dr. Pat Averill's colleagues and friends, a memorial fund in her name has been established at the University of Houston Department of Psychology. She served as the Director of Research and Program Evaluation at The University of Texas- Harris County Psychiatric Center (HCPC) and was on the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the UT Medical School at Houston since 1993. She established a high standard in teaching, mentoring, and research, particularly in the areas of anxiety, mood, and behavioral disorders. Her dedication to patient care and student mentoring is an inspiration and a continuing source of pride for the department.

Drs. Joy Schmitz, Melinda Stanley, Angela Stotts, and Sharon Morgan were all on faculty together at UT and kept in close contact with Pat. They thought a memorial fund would be a meaningful way to honor Pat's memory and contributions to the clinical psychology field. Fourteen supporters have contributed to the fund since December 2010.

We have collected memories from people who have been impacted by Pat and asked them to share a fond memory. Dr. Joy Schmitz, a close friend and colleague of Pat, sent us her responses to the interviewer's questions:

What is one thing you remember Pat said that illustrates her professional philosophy?

Pat believed that clinical psychology was a profession in which good training was of paramount importance. "Competence" is what Pat conveyed in her words, her actions, and her expectations of trainees. She had a genuine interest in seeing her students fulfill their potential, and in her typical tireless fashion, she motivated scores of students to gain skill and confidence in their clinical work. When Pat spoke, people listened. Not just because of her elegant English accent, but because her words were articulate and wise. She appreciated clinical psychology as a profession based on the integration of science and treatment and conveyed this philosophy in her words and actions.

She mentored a lot of students over the years; can you describe her impact as a mentor?

Students considered it a privilege to work under Pat's tutelage. It is not surprising that the Harris County Psychiatric Center (HCPS) was a top choice for practicum students and residents during the many years Pat was supervisor. The same qualities that made her a remarkable colleague and friend were manifested in her teaching – honesty, sincerity, and diligence. Pat was known for her amazing writing and editing abilities. I doubt that any student sent her a report or manuscript that didn't come back bleeding with red marks! Her feedback, no matter how extensive and critical, was delivered in a manner that expressed support and encouragement. Moreover, she cared for the personal and professional development of each student. For years after they graduated, she stayed in close contact with many of her students — sharing and applauding their career achievements.

What were community or university activities she was especially passionate about?

Pat was extraordinary in her devotion to the UT-H institution. She was especially passionate about her role as member of the UT Medical School Admissions Committee and the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Whether it was evaluating applicants for medical school or research protocols for ethical compliance, Pat was highly respected for her thoroughness and fairness. For many faculty members, this level of committee work can detract from productivity in other areas, but that simply was not the case for Pat. She was a master at time-management.

As her very close colleague and friend, what do you miss about her most?

I miss sharing ideas with Pat, as well as getting her advice and feedback. No matter how busy, Pat would always take time to listen and offer her "two cents" (worth so much more)! Pat was known for her ability to demonstrate grace under pressure. I could always count on Pat to take a complex situation, apply her impeccable analytic skills, and offer a straightforward resolution.

Ms. Lauren Castles provided some fine memories about Dr. Averill:

Dr. Averill was an exceptional supervisor, and I attribute much of my skill in working with patients to her guidance. Even in the pressure of limited time at HCPC, she spent much time helping me work through my understanding of patient's psychological functioning and how best to apply therapy based on my conceptualization. Her approach to supervision provoked thought in my actions as a psychology student entering the world of inpatient care. Most importantly, through her expertise and guidance, I gained confidence. When I heard of her passing, I quickly thought of how great a loss it is to the field of psychology. She had so much experience and knew how to teach others, and through her work and supervision, her knowledge and dedication to the field continues. I would like to keep up to date with her memorial fund. It is yet another way she keeps giving to the field for which she had so much passion!

We encourage alumni and friends to continue to support this scholarship to exemplify the spirit of Dr. Averill. The Clinical Psychology Program will benefit from an endowment fund if alumni would make the commitment to augment this fund. Donor response card is attached on the back cover.

University of Houston

Department of Psychology

126 Heyne Building
Houston, Texas 77204-5022
Phone: 713-743-8500
Fax: 713-743-8588

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Newsletter from UH Psychology Department to the Community and Psychology Alumni

Chair: David J. Francis, Ph.D.

Editor & Director of Advancement: Lolin Wang-Bennett, Ph.D.

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