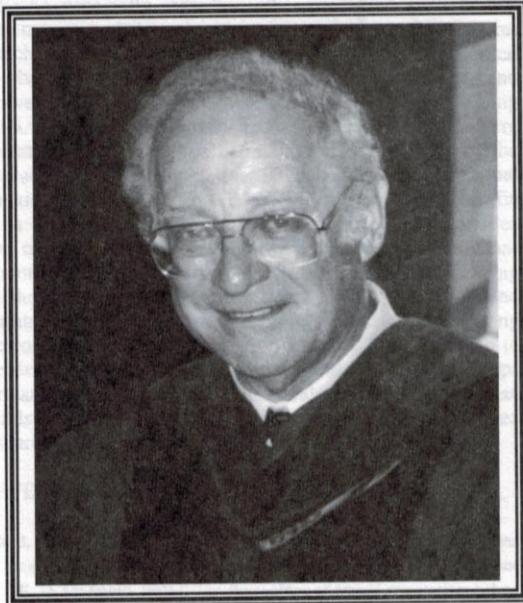

Age-Irrelevant Contributions to Developmental Science

In remembrance of Donald M. Baer

OBITUARY

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Donald M. Baer -- Roy A. Roberts Distinguished Professor of Human Development and Family Life and of Psychology at the University of Kansas -- died unexpectedly of natural causes at his home in Lawrence, KS on April 28, 2002. He is survived by his wife, Elsie M. Pinkston, Professor of Social Services Administration at the University of Chicago, three daughters from an earlier marriage to Ann Marshall -- Ruth, Miriam, and Deborah -- and his brother, Robert.

Don was born in St. Louis, MO, on October 25, 1931, grew up in Chicago, and attended the University of Chicago. In 1950, he received a B.A. with honors from Chicago; in 1957, he earned a doctorate in experimental psychology under the supervision of Jacob

L. Gewirtz. At the University of Washington (1957-1965), he began a notable program of research in the experimental analysis of child behavior and, with Sidney W. Bijou, established a behavior-analytic approach to child development. At the University of Kansas (1965-2002), he continued his program of research in behavioral development, but also turned toward applied behavior analysis in the service of atypical developmental outcomes (e.g., developmental disabilities; Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968).

Frances Degan Horowitz had established the Department of Human Development and Family Life in 1963. Under her administrative guidance, she and Don, along with Barbara C. Etzel and James A. Sherman, built a program of national stature in behavior analysis, early childhood education, and developmental psychology (Baer, 1993). The Department received many years of continuous training grant funding from the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development; it received an award from the Society for Research in Child Development for its programs in early childhood; and in 2000, it was the first academic department to receive the award for Enduring Programmatic Contributions to Behavior Analysis from the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis (SABA). Don accepted the award on behalf of the Department's faculty, students, and staff.

Don was not only the acknowledged intellectual leader in the Department, but also an outstanding Senior Scientist in KU's Bureau of Child Research, now the Schiefelbusch Life-span Institute, where he secured significant federal funding for his research. He published over two hundred and fifty books, journal articles, chapters, book reviews, and commentaries, and made innumerable presentations, many of them seminal and enduring contributions to the behavior analysis of development. Among the conceptual topics he addressed were developmental theory (e.g., Baer, 1976), developmental psychology as a discipline (e.g., Baer & Wright, 1974), the behavior analysis of development (e.g., Bijou & Baer, 1961, 1965, 1978; see also Bijou & Baer, 1967; Midgley & Baer, 1997), interrelations between developmental psychology and behavior analysis (e.g., Morris, Hursh, Winston, Gelfand, Hartmann, Reese, & Baer, 1982), developmental concepts such as ages (Baer, 1970), stages (Rosales-Ruiz & Baer, 1996), structure

(Baer, 1982), and the nature and process of development itself (Baer, 1973; Baer & Rosales-Ruiz, 1998).

Among his empirical contributions were (a) experimental methods and research designs (e.g., Bijou & Baer, 1960, 1964, 1966); (b) the experimental analysis of child behavior, for instance, with respect to establishing operations (e.g., social deprivation; Gewirtz & Baer, 1958a, 1958b; Gewirtz & Baer, & Roth, 1958) and aversive control (e.g., escape and avoidance; Baer, 1960, 1961, 1962a, 1962b); and (c) behavioral analyses and syntheses in such content domains as social development (e.g., Harris, Wolf, & Baer, 1964; Hart, Reynolds, Baer, Brawley, & Harris, 1968), imitation (e.g., Baer & Sherman, 1964), language development and verbal behavior (e.g., Guess, Sailor, Rutherford, & Baer, 1968; Rosenfeld & Baer, 1970), verbal-nonverbal correspondence (e.g., Paniagua & Baer, 1982; Rogers-Warren & Baer, 1976), self-instructions (e.g., Duarte & Baer, 1994; Fjellstrom, Born, & Baer, 1988; Grote, Roslaes, & Baer, 1996; Grote, Rosales, Morrison, Royer, & Baer, 1997), and creativity (e.g., Goetz & Baer, 1973; Holman, Goetz, & Baer, 1977).

And, of course, his analyses of and interventions into atypical development are legion, especially in behavior disorders (e.g., Silverman, Watanabe, Marshall, & Baer, 1984), developmental disabilities and mental retardation (e.g., Warren, Baxter, Anderson, Marshall, & Baer, 1981), early childhood (e.g., Baer, Rowbury, & Goetz, 1976), and education (e.g., Baer & Bushell, 1981; Thomson, Holmberg, & Baer, 1978) -- and in the generalization of intervention outcomes (e.g., Stokes & Baer, 1977). (For reviews, see Baer & Sherman, 1970; Risley & Baer, 1973.)

Don received many awards for these and other contributions, among them the 1987 Don Hake Award from Division 25 (Behavior Analysis) of the American Psychological Association (APA) for work bridging basic and applied research, APA's 1996 Division 33 (Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities) Edgar A. Doll Award for his contributions to people with developmental disabilities, and the 1997 award for Distinguished Service to Behavior Analysis from SABA. He also served as president of the Association for Behavior Analysis (1980-1981), associate editor of the *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* (1964-1967), and a reviewer for numerous developmental and behavioral journals, and international and federal granting agencies. Finally, Don was widely sought after as an internationally distinguished visiting scholar (e.g., Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain); this summer, he was to visit Poland, then later Brazil. Last winter, under the leadership of Professor Emerita Etzel, the Department established a Donald M. Baer Faculty Award. It will be given to a current faculty member whose work in the basic, applied, or conceptual analysis of behavior contributes to our understanding and improvement of human development. Once funded, it will support a half-time graduate research assistant for the recipient.

At the University of Kansas, Don supervised over 100 doctoral dissertations in Developmental and Child Psychology, and served on over 150 master's theses committees in the Department's program in early childhood and behavior analysis. Beloved by his students, Don was honored by them on April 12-14, 2002, with a conference, receptions, and a banquet -- a BaerFest. They celebrated Don's contributions to behavior analysis and developmental psychology, his teaching and mentoring, and his impending retirement in June. Over 100 colleagues traveled from all over the world to be with him -- from Brazil, Japan, New Zealand, and Norway.

Don is remembered for his analytic brilliance and his wit; his high standards for experimental proof; his advocacy on the behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities; his great generosity and good will toward graduate students and junior colleagues; and of course, his timeless, age-irrelevant contributions to developmental science.

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