Memorial Resolution  
Associate Professor Anthony F. Fazio

Associate Professor Anthony F. Fazio of the Department of Psychology passed away on January 2nd, 1999. Fazio had been a faculty member of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee since 1967. Although he lost his courageous three year battle with esophageal cancer, many of us were deeply moved by his successful effort to teach his courses right up until the end. The image of Fazio moving very slowly across campus from class to class is deeply etched upon our minds and inspires all of us to be better instructors.

Fazio earned his Bachelor’s Degree from Rutgers in 1962 and he earned his masters degree just one year later from Bradley University. He graduated with his doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Connecticut-Storrs in 1967. He joined the Psychology Department at UWM right after completing his clinical internship and was tenured in 1972.

Fazio was an outstanding educator who distinguished himself very early in his career. In 1972 he was awarded the Standard Oil Award for Teaching Excellence. Just one year later he was honored by receiving both the Knapp Award for the Improvement of Undergraduate Instruction and the Outstanding Educator of America Award. Over the years Fazio developed a following of extremely devoted and loyal students. His courses were often entertaining and controversial. Fazio was never afraid to render an opinion on any topic, even if it was unpopular. His forthrightness and unwillingness to yield to popular opinions made Fazio a role model of individuality to his students and colleagues. Fazio did not shy away from opposing viewpoints. Despite having a decidedly non-biological approach, he sought to enlarge his viewpoint by offering to co-teach a neuroscience class with a newly hired neuropsychologist; such was his love of study and intellectual honesty.

Fazio enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a researcher. Best known for his research on dreams and his pioneering work on implosive therapy, Fazio accumulated twenty-five publications in prestigious peer-reviewed journals, including the American Psychologist, the Journal of Abnormal Psychology, and Rehabilitation Psychology. He wrote a book entitled Topics In Psychology and he also gave numerous professional presentations at national and regional scientific conferences. One of Fazio’s greatest strengths as a researcher was his ability to exercise his academic freedom and study diverse topics that were of interest to him and his students. He published research in such diverse areas as talking to the fetus during pregnancy, depression, fear, insect phobias, and the psychological correlates of bladder dysfunction.

Fazio was a hard working and valuable advisor to his students. He advised twenty-one graduate students on their masters theses and saw fifteen graduate students through their dissertation defenses. Undergraduate research advisees would number well into the hundreds and many of them would report to the faculty that Fazio had been instrumental in their career choice in psychology. Fazio’s students were impressed by his emphasis on exploring and enjoying all avenues of life. For example, Fazio congratulated one of his graduate students when the student reported that he would be taking a few days off to take a leisure trip. Fazio’s philosophy was that people should be congratulated for taking some time for themselves, in the
same way that someone is congratulated for completing a project or receiving an achievement award. As one former advisee of Fazio’s put it, “I felt like one of Plato’s students.” Even graduate students who were not his research advisees have noted that Fazio was always willing to sit down and discuss topics outside of psychology, including Eastern Philosophy and comparative religion. In many ways, Fazio was the quintessential academic; encouraging and facilitating the contemplative life that makes the University experience so rich.

Fazio served his department, university and community in many different capacities. At the Department level he served on numerous committees, including spending years as the advisor to Psi Chi, the National Honor Society for psychology majors. He was also Director of Clinical Training for many years. At the University level Fazio served on numerous committees, including the Teaching Excellence Committee, the Computer Policy Committee, the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, and the Extension Policy Committee. Throughout the 1970s Fazio was extremely active in community service, serving on the Board of the Milwaukee Museum, the Boy’s Club of Milwaukee, the Boys Club of New York, and as group facilitator at Batterers Anonymous. He received numerous other accolades including listing in the Wisconsin Men of Achievement, Outstanding Young Men of America, the Psi Chi Service Award, the UWM Service Award, the Psi Chi Certificate of Appreciation, and Who’s Who in Human Service Professionals.

Following Fazio’s passing, funeral services were held at St. John the Evangelist Church in Milwaukee. Fazio is survived by his five children: April, Holly, Connie, Amy, and Graham; his wife Mary and his mother Tina. A devoted family man, Fazio could sometimes be seen racing one of his children up the stairs to his office using the elevator while his child would elect to take the more expedient stairs. In his last semesters, he openly shared with his students his appreciation for his beloved family. Fazio was a study in courage to students who would be lead by his example. As one student put it when she learned of his passing, “It breaks my heart a little. I will be eternally grateful for his guidance and for taking the time to get to know me; to understand me.”

To honor Fazio’s memory, the Department of Psychology will be awarding Fazio Research Prizes in the Spring of 1999 to undergraduate and graduate psychology students who presented their research at national and regional research conferences. These awards are a fitting tribute to a man who devoted his life to university educational endeavors. Fazio’s contributions live on in spirit for his students and colleagues. He will be greatly missed.

Rhea Steinpreis,
Associate Professor of Psychology