

OBITUARY

Chester Harris died on March 22, 1994 in Santa Barbara, California after an extended illness. He was 83. Chet was born on April 27, 1910 in Denver, Colorado. He received his A.B. degree from the University of Denver in 1931, after which he taught English in the Denver Public Schools until 1939. He then went to the University of Chicago, worked on the Eight Year Study and received his Ph.D. in 1946. From 1942-1946 he served in the U.S. Air Force as an aviation Psychologist with the rank of Major. Chet returned to the University of Chicago where he was an Assistant Professor from 1946-1948. Chet then moved to the University of Wisconsin at Madison where he became the A. S. Barr professor of Educational Psychology. In 1970 he moved to the University of California, Santa Barbara, serving as Professor of Education until his retirement in 1977. While retired, Chet enjoyed duplicate bridge and became a Life Master in 1989.

His academic contributions are numerous and have gained an unusual amount of recognition. In psychometrics he is best known for his work on factor analysis as well as mental test theory. One of his better known papers deals with oblique factor analytic solutions by orthogonal transformations which he wrote with Henry Kaiser. He edited several books, including the third edition of the *Encyclopedia of Educational Research and Problems in Measuring Change*, which became required reading for anyone interested in psychometric methods.

One of Chet's more remarkable accomplishments was the level of recognition he achieved in relatively disparate fields. He was president of the American Educational Research Association in 1960, and seven years later he served as president of the Psychometric Society, a feat that might never be duplicated. In 1966 he was president of the Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychologists. He was also a fellow of the American Statistical Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Psychological Association. He served as editor of the *Review of Educational Research* from 1954 to 1956, and he was editor of *Psychometrika* from 1966 to 1972.

One remarkable feature about Chet was his lack of formal training in mathematics, something he loved to joke about. He taught himself matrix theory, a tool he would need to do his research. He never learned how to differentiate even the simplest function, yet he developed the quantitative skills necessary to make important contributions to psychometric theory.

Chet had another gift which only a few of us can fully appreciate. He had an exceptionally strong interest in his students. A student couldn't ask for a better mentor. Chet had unwavering confidence in the ability of his students to do well, he would go to great efforts to provide opportunities that might advance their academic careers, and he got a great deal of joy from their successes. He regularly bragged about former students and colleagues with a smile on his face and twinkle in his eye.

Chet is survived by his wife, Peg, two children and two grandchildren. He will be missed.

Rand Wilcox