

The Supremely Old, Supremely Sharp, Supreme Court

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The Atlantic:

Justice Antonin Scalia, more than any other Supreme Court justice, set the parameters for the constitutional debates of this era. The sharpness of his mind and the rigor of his jurisprudence were regularly on display up until his passing. As those of us fortunate enough to have directly engaged with him in recent years can attest, up until his last breath, there was no indication that he had dulled in his ability to navigate the incredible intellectual challenges that were his job description.

...

But what does the inevitable deterioration of fluid intelligence mean in terms of the ability to work into the golden years? The answer, unsatisfyingly, defies easy generalization. First, all humans approach the starting blocks of the race against time with different cognitive baselines. As Ian Deary, the director of the Centre for Cognitive Ageing at the University of Edinburgh, writes, “Of the many possible contributors to cognitive ability level in old age, none yet known approaches the effect size of mental ability measured in childhood.”

Read the whole story: [The Atlantic](#)