

APS, Psychonomic Society Join Forces on Estes Fund

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A new partnership of APS and the Psychonomic Society will oversee a fund to extend the legacy of one of the most influential psychological scientists of the past century. The partnership will support a variety of activities aimed at strengthening methodology in mathematical, quantitative and experimental psychology and related areas.

The two organizations will jointly oversee the William K. & Katherine W. Estes Fund, established in honor of the late Bill Estes and his wife Kay. Bill Estes was an intellectual force of nature whose pioneering work had a profound influence in psychological science and earned him the nation's highest scientific honors, including the National Medal of Science.

The Psychonomic Society, with a membership of 2,700, publishes six leading journals, including its flagship *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*. The society was established in 1959 by a group of experimental psychologists "to foster high scientific standards for psychological research and the traditional academic values associated with a scientific discipline," according to the invitation to charter membership in the society, which also indicated that "the membership and activities of the society will be guided not so much by specific content area in which such research is done as by the serious nature of the research and by the methodology followed." These values are shared by APS, now in its 25th year with nearly 25,000 members and five leading journals, including its flagship *Psychological Science*.

Estes was a major figure in both organizations. He was a founder of the Psychonomic Society and his influence can be seen throughout its activities. APS has a special connection to Bill and Kay Estes; he was the founding editor of the APS journal *Psychological Science*, and she was the founding managing editor, and together — working in the same corner of the of the William James house at Harvard where James edited *Principles of Psychology* — they established the solid foundation of high-quality cutting-edge empirical science on which the journal still rests.

The Fund was initiated with a significant bequest to APS from the late Raphael Mark Hanson, a long-time APS member with an interest in mathematical psychology and related methodology. The Psychonomic Society is matching Hanson's contribution and many individuals have also made substantial contributions in honor of Bill and Kay.

"The Estes Fund provides the Psychonomic Society with a wonderful opportunity to honor one of our society's founders and to join APS in developing new programs to support mathematical issues critical to psychological science," said Helene Intraub, University of Delaware, chair-elect of the Psychonomics

governing board.

The Estes Fund will be overseen by a Steering Committee that will include members of both APS and Psychonomics. The charter members of the committee were Gordon Bower, Stanford University; Roberta Klatzky, Carnegie Mellon University; and Douglas Medin, Northwestern University, all of whom are members of both groups, plus Lawrence Erlbaum, pioneering publisher and ardent supporter of psychological science. Medin and Klatzky will continue to serve and two new members from Psychonomics will be appointed.

“The Psychonomic Society and APS share a lot: Goals, members, and the fact that Bill Estes played a formative role in the establishment of both organizations,” noted Jeffrey Zacks of Washington University in St. Louis and current chair of the Psychonomic governing board. “This new initiative gives an opportunity to leverage the resources of both organizations to do things that neither could do alone. As we talked about colleagues who could serve on the committee to direct the Estes Fund, it was telling that everyone we thought of already was involved with both Psychonomics and APS. Clearly, this is a very natural collaboration!”

The Fund has already supported talks honoring Bill Estes by Robert A. Bjork and Richard M. Shiffrin at the May 2012 APS Convention, and ideas for future initiatives are being explored. In addition to lectures, possible activities may include: workshops and symposia; debates on methodology; new small conferences; speakers at established meetings; updates on topics Estes pioneered (for example, the conditioned suppression paradigm, with Skinner; stimulus sampling theory) or was interested in (for example, computer assisted instruction); summer fellowships; supplemental awards for such programs as the Cattell Fund sabbaticals; research agenda-setting conferences for the future of some quantitative areas; initiatives to support women in the field of mathematically based psychology; and efforts to encourage greater attention on methodology more generally.

“Talk about a win-win situation,” said Klatzky, who also serves as APS Treasurer. “I am not sure how many wins one needs to describe this partnership. It honors Bill Estes, one of the founders of both APS and Psychonomics. It focuses on the mathematical foundations of psychological science that were so central to Bill’s work and that, as the original donor to APS recognized, continue to constitute a core need for research and training. And it provides a novel and exciting model for cooperation between scientific societies with common interests and constituencies.”