

In Appreciation: Raymond A. Katzell

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Industrial-organizational psychologist Raymond A. Katzell died February 5, 2003. Katzell was a strong influence in the area of motivation and job satisfaction. He received his PhD in psychology from New York University in 1943, where he served on the psychology faculty from 1957 until his retirement in 1984, when he became an emeritus professor. During World War II, he served as a personnel psychologist with the U.S. War Department (1943 – 1945). He also served on the psychology faculties at the University of Tennessee (1945 – 1948) and Syracuse University (1948 – 1951), and was a founding member of the consulting firm of Richardson, Bellows, Henry and Company (1951 – 1957).

Katzell's primary research focus was in the area of motivation and satisfaction, developing his influential theory of job satisfaction, during the 1960s, and, with Donna Thompson, an integrated model of motivation during the 1990s. His most well-known works include *Work, Satisfaction, and Productivity*, which examines the effectiveness of productivity enhancement interventions, and the seminal *Testing and Fair Employment*, published in 1968 with J. Kirkpatrick, R. Ewen, and R. Barrett. Katzell co-chaired the U.S. Department of Labor's Advisory Committee on Testing and Selection, which played an important role in drafting the 1968 and 1971 Office of Federal Contract Compliance testing orders and the more well-known 1971 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission testing guidelines.

Saturdays with Ray

James J. Kirkpatrick

As Ray's first PhD (Syracuse, 1953), I want to express my feelings about him as a professor, and more importantly, as a person.

I first knew Ray in 1946 when I returned from WWII military service to re-enter the University of Tennessee. He was a young prof then, only three years from his PhD, and I had the good fortune to have him for one of my first classes. Our meeting was a pivotal event, one that changed the rest of my life. His performance as a professor so impressed me that I not only switched my major to psychology but eventually to industrial psychology specifically. My reasoning was if psychology has people of Ray's caliber, this is the field for me! This transition was more of a leap than it may appear today because in the 1940s, psychology was a small field generally confined to the laboratory, and industrial psychology was virtually unknown.

When Ray moved on to Syracuse University in 1948, I soon followed in order to complete a PhD under him. Years later, I left my management consulting firm when he offered me an opportunity to return to the academic field at NYU, where he was head of the all-university psychology department.

Ray did not just teach leadership; he personified leadership. I know that I speak for the other 30-some

Katzell PhDs when I say that Ray was an inspirational role model for all of us. There was no one else in my years of schooling that had all of his talents – and I had a number of outstanding teachers along the way.

He has affected my life in more ways than I can relate, but one especially meaningful example is that when Shirley and I were married, Ray and Kitty were there at the church to “stand up” for us. He was my good friend and was always available whenever I needed counsel. I am not too bashful to say that he has been my primary exemplar, and whatever measure of success I may have enjoyed, I owe largely to him.

In the last year or so, I made a practice of calling him as often as once a week, usually on Saturdays. We discussed a wide variety of topics such as college football and cars, reminisced about past experiences we had shared, and even occasionally, academic and professional issues. As his health declined during his last months, I called almost every Saturday. Thus, instead of Tuesdays with Morrie (the bestseller chronicling a former student’s visits during his professor’s last years), I had Saturdays with Ray.

I deeply regret that these Saturdays came to an end.

Ray Was a Remarkable Mentor

Madeline Heilman

Ray Katzell’s scholarly and professional contributions earned him many awards and honors, including the highly prized APA award for Distinguished Scientific Contribution to Industrial and Organizational Psychology. But those of us who worked with him know there was much more to Ray than his distinguished scholarly and professional contributions. His warmth, generosity and vitality have enabled graduate students and faculty colleagues to reach out, explore, and thrive in their careers and personal endeavors.

Ray was a remarkable mentor. He was approachable and supportive, but he never compromised his scholarly standards, which were very high. He took his students seriously – treating them with respect, nurturing their talents, and encouraging them to pursue their ideas. A good idea was simply a good idea to Ray; it mattered little whether the person presenting it was an eminent leader in the field or a second year graduate student. His gifts as a mentor earned him the gratitude and respect of many generations of students.

Ray also took pride in recognizing and helping to develop raw talent. I vividly remember one year’s admissions committee deliberations when Ray singled out a young male applicant who, on paper, did not appear to merit acceptance into our graduate program. Yet Ray saw something special in him – a promise of originality, perhaps – and convinced the rest of the committee to take a chance and admit the applicant provisionally. The student flourished under Ray’s tutelage, and became a star in our graduate program as well as a star in his professional activities. Ray gave him the confidence to realize his potential, and his life was forever changed.

As a colleague, Ray was a delight. He had a way of making the most tedious chores enjoyable, and his

passion for industrial/organizational psychology was contagious. We all loved to go to lunch with Ray. He was a lot of fun – charming, talkative, and always ready to laugh. Lunching with him also was incredibly productive. He would inquire about our latest research projects, and was always thoughtful, and always straightforward in his reactions. His incisiveness was awesome. Ray had a way of getting to the essence of an issue, and we always knew that whether he liked what we were “into” or not, we would walk away with an important insight that would inform our future thinking. And this did not end when Ray retired; in fact, in my very last conversation with him, a week before he died, he insisted upon hearing about a study I was in the midst of conducting.

It is no surprise that Ray was so often sought out as a commentator on our field. He would be asked to write critiques that chronicled past and present research trends, and suggest the new directions that our work should take. His intellectual honesty coupled with his ability to see the big picture uniquely enabled him both to identify our collective foibles and to be a guiding force for our future. He played this important role until his death.

Ray Katzell has left an indelible mark on all of us who worked with him. His death is an enormous loss, but he has left a wonderful legacy both in his intellectual accomplishments and in the support and inspiration he provided. Ray always took such pride in having the good taste and prescience to “pick winners” when selecting students and junior colleagues who would go on to make important contributions in their areas of work. But he was too humble to recognize the truth of the matter: Those whom he picked became winners in no small part because Ray was a part of their lives.

A Great Loss for the Field

William K. Balzer

Dr. Katzell served on my dissertation committee, and I remember him asking hard questions and gently sharing when he didn't like an answer (it happened more than once). All of his students wanted his approval because of the immense respect we had for him. When I was informed that I had passed my defense, he warmly congratulated me and let me know that it would now be okay to call him “Ray” and not “Dr. Katzell.” It was the greatest gift of this rite of passage. Yet even until his death, I could not bring myself to call him Ray. He would always be, for me and many of his students, Dr. Katzell.

As a 1983 graduate of New York University's industrial-organizational psychology doctoral program, I have wonderful memories of Dr. Ray Katzell. He cared very much for graduate students, and was a great role model regardless of where your career took you – highly principled, deeply caring, and very committed to using his professional knowledge and experience to make the world of work just a little bit better.

Dr. Katzell had already retired from NYU by the time I arrived, but his retirement was in name only. Dr. Katzell continued to teach graduate courses, conduct research, and mentor graduate students. His organizational psychology seminar was one of the more challenging courses at NYU. There was no text book per se, because no single text captured as complete and integrated a view of organizational psychology that existed in Dr. Katzell's head based on his decades of research and consulting. His relaxed teaching style, socratic method (no drifting off in his class!), and sense of humor made every

class period fly by. You left his class having a real sense of why organizations work and don't work, and how we as aspiring I-O psychologists had a responsibility to improve the workplace through the application of sound theory and research.

I believe I had the distinction of being his last graduate assistant at NYU (some might infer a causal relationship here). Dr. Katzell had been developing an integrated view of workplace motivation to advance our thinking as a discipline and to help organizations improve their bottom line while making jobs more satisfying. Dr. Katzell involved his research assistants in all aspects of his work, patiently sharing his knowledge and helping you think critically, communicate effectively, and understand our ethical responsibility to the employees' whose lives we affect. But it was not all work and no play. During a data collection trip to the Center for Creative Leadership, Dr. Katzell took me to watch the Greensboro Hornets, a semi-pro baseball team. He was an avid baseball fan, and really liked semi pro stadiums where you could get close enough to the players so that they could hear you when you yelled at them. We talked baseball, ate hot dogs, and yelled at (motivated?) the players. I'll never forget how lucky I felt to have the chance to spend so much time with such a great psychologist and kind man.

As I began my career at Bowling Green State University, Dr. Katzell remained a constant source of support. He offered advice and provided feedback, always in a warm and positive way, helping me establish myself as a teacher and researcher. Over time, we communicated less and less, but he always let you know that he was there to help. When you had Dr. Katzell in your corner, you felt you'd succeed.

Dr. Katzell's death is a great loss for our field and his family and friends. While he and Kitty Katzell never had biological children, they had many academic offspring. Raymond Katzell will long be remembered for his own work and contributions, but a significant part of his legacy live on in the many students who were so fortunate to have him as a teacher, mentor, and friend.