

# New APS Leaders at the Helm

September 01, 2007

The annual rite of passage has occurred and new APS leaders are in place for 2007-08. John T. Cacioppo has taken over as President, and Morton Ann Gernsbacher begins her term as Immediate Past President. She succeeds Michael S. Gazzaniga in that post. Walter Mischel is APS President-Elect.

Two new members of the APS Board of Directors are Thomas Oltmanns and Sharon Thompson-Schill. They replace retiring Board members Richard Bootzin and Elizabeth Phelps.

Please welcome our new leaders and read more about them below.

## **John T. Cacioppo**

### **APS President**

**(2007-2008)**

APS Fellow and Charter Member John T. Cacioppo steps into his presidency with a strong dedication to APS's mission and clear ideas on how to usher the organization into its 20th year.

Currently the Director of the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience at the University of Chicago, Cacioppo is a pioneer in the field of social neuroscience, looking at connections between the social and neural mechanisms underlying human behavior.

Psychological scientists are in an ideal position to contribute to and to lead interdisciplinary research teams to address a wide range of theoretical and practical questions," he says.

Cacioppo has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Society of Experimental Psychologists, and the Society of Experimental Social Psychology. Among his numerous honors, Cacioppo has received the National Academy of Sciences Troland Award, the Distinguished Scientific Award for an Early Career Contribution to Psychophysiology, the Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions to Psychophysiology from the Society for Psychophysiological Research, and the Donald Campbell Award from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

Cacioppo has been extensively involved in APS for a number of years prior to his election as President. He is a past member of the APS Board of Directors, a former Associate Editor of APS's *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, was Keynote Speaker at the 14th Annual APS Convention in 2002, and is a member of the APS publications committee. His current research, funded by the National Institute on Aging, focuses on the detrimental effects of loneliness on health in the aging population. He also serves on NIA's advisory council.

"APS has always been an effective advocate for psychological science," says Cacioppo.

As President, he will meet with a newly formed international liaison committee to solicit ideas on

expanding APS's advocacy "to include psychological science internationally." A new column in the *Observer*, entitled "Psychological Science Around the World," (see p. 29) written each month by an international scholar, will enhance this effort. Cacioppo also will strive to promote the science's accessibility, with the hope that anyone worldwide can have free access to psychological science.

An avid supporter of APS's mission to promote psychological science, Cacioppo says that "APS has long emphasized cross-cutting issues in our discipline in its annual convention and in its journals, and the resulting centripetal forces have contributed to psychology becoming a hub scientific discipline." (Please see his Presidential Column on p.5 for further discussion on this topic.)

## **Walter Mischel**

### **APS President-Elect (2007-2008)**

APS William James Fellow Walter Mischel is the Robert Johnston Niven Professor of psychology at Columbia University, where he has been since 1983. Before he arrived at Columbia, Mischel spent 20 years at Stanford University, where he developed the "delay of immediate gratification for the sake of delayed but more valued rewards" paradigm, better known — albeit inaccurately — as the "Marshmallow Test." At Stanford in 1968, he also published the monograph *Personality and Assessment*, which profoundly challenged the classic trait paradigm to personality and revised that field's agenda for decades. In his years at Columbia and to this day, his work continues to be at the vanguard of theory and research for understanding the nature of coherence and variability in personality and the organization of the individual's behavior across situations, within situations, and over time. The 8th edition of his classic textbook, *Introduction to Personality: Toward an Integrative Science of the Person*, with Yuichi Shoda and Ozlem Ayduk, has just been published by Wiley.

Mischel counts being elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 2004 and to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1991 among his many honors. He also has received the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award from the American Psychological Association, the Distinguished Scientist Award from the Society of Experimental Social Psychologists, the Distinguished Scientist Award of APA's Division of Clinical Psychology, and the Jack Block Award for Distinguished Contributions to Personality Psychology from the Society of Personality and Social Psychology.

Mischel's research on delay of gratification mechanisms, self regulation, and the organization and structure of personality and social behavior has been supported by 20 years (1989-2009) of continuous MERIT Awards from the National Institute of Mental Health. He is currently a co-investigator on a grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and on an inter-disciplinary grant from the National Science Foundation.

Mischel is now adding APS President-Elect to an illustrious resume that has spanned more than five decades. Mischel says he hopes to "use this office to facilitate inter-disciplinary research connections with closely related sciences and within subfields of psychology toward building a more integrative science of mind-brain social behavior connections."

With this in mind, Mischel also hopes to redraw what he describes as "archaic" boundaries between sub-disciplines in psychology. He believes that this will "facilitate better science training and education for students in light of rapid changes emerging within the relevant sciences."

Mischel adds that he is committed to further enhancing and expanding APS's journals and publications program during his term.

### **Thomas F. Oltmanns**

#### **APS Board Member (2007-2010)**

Also joining the APS Board this year is APS Fellow and Charter Member Thomas F. Oltmanns. Oltmanns, the Edgar James Swift Professor of Psychology in Arts and Sciences, Professor of Psychiatry, and Director of Clinical Training in Psychology at Washington University in St. Louis, joins the Board looking to APS's future. "I'm looking forward to meeting other people and becoming more actively involved in discussions and activities that relate to the long-term goals of the organization," he says. He is also excited by APS's cross-disciplinary nature because "the best thing about APS — the crucial thing — is that it represents psychology as a science, broadly defined."

Oltmanns' work focuses on the assessment of psychopathology, particularly of personality disorders and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). One of his current projects relating to personality disorders is examining the accuracy of self report relative to peer report in those suffering from these disorders. Data have shown that people are able to at least partially understand how others view them, even when this conflicts with their views, prompting more studies into the importance of self-knowledge.

Another facet of Oltmanns' research is the cross-cultural validity of self-report instruments for assessing OCD. His studies have shown that current OCD inventories are not valid in African Americans. He is currently conducting further research to develop a non-culturally biased measure of OCD, so that all people may benefit equally from proper OCD treatment.

Oltmanns has served as president of the Society for a Science of Clinical Psychology and has been involved in the leadership of the Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology, the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science, and the Society for Research in Psychopathology. He has also held editorial positions with the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, the *Journal of Personality Disorders*, and *Psychological Bulletin*.

Oltmanns is the author of two textbooks, *Abnormal Psychology*, now in its fifth edition, and *Case Studies in Abnormal Psychology*, now in its seventh edition. Used at universities throughout the world, these books have taught thousands of students about the importance of sound clinical psychological science.

**Sharon Thompson-Schill**  
**APS Board Member**  
**(2007-2010)**

APS also welcomes new Board member APS Fellow Sharon Thompson-Schill, the Class of 1965 Endowed Term Associate Professor of Psychology and Neurology at the University of Pennsylvania. Like the other new Board members, Thompson-Schill is excited by the Board's ability to "help foster connections between seemingly disparate areas" of psychology. She also hopes to use her Board tenure to "facilitate advances in education and in issues affecting women in academia."

Thompson-Schill, who also serves on the APS Fellows Committee, received her PhD in cognitive psychology from Stanford in 1996. From her advisor at Stanford, John Gabrielli, Schill learned that a "happy lab is a productive lab (and if not, at least it's happy)," something that she has taken to heart in the managing of her current NIH-funded lab at the University of Pennsylvania. There, she and her students study the neural underpinnings of memory and language. In particular, Thompson-Schill is currently focused on the "role that the frontal lobes play in the regulation of cognitive processes." Using many different methods, including eye-tracking, fMRI, and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), a technique in which changing magnetic fields are used to stimulate and study neurons in the brain, Thompson-Schill studies both normal cognition and cognition in individuals suffering from stroke, degenerative disease, and congenital blindness.

In addition to her research, Thompson-Schill also is an enthusiastic and esteemed teacher. In 2006, she won the Lindback Award for Teaching, the University of Pennsylvania's highest teaching award. Thompson-Schill says that teaching "provides a leveling balance to the ups and downs of a typical research career; it's the academic equivalent of lithium!" When things are not going as planned in the lab, she can rely on the more controllable environment in the classroom. Also, Thompson-Schill gets inspiration for projects in the lab from her students. Student questions are often the very thing to "dislodge a mind that is semi-permanently embedded in theoretical dogma" and set it on a new course of thought, questioning, and, ultimately, toward new studies.

When asked about why her research is exciting to her, Thompson-Schill responded, "explaining why cognitive neuroscience is exciting to me requires imagining someone for whom it would not be exciting, and my powers of imagination are not that great. How could it not be exciting to try to figure out how neural systems give rise to all the amazing powers of cognition that humans possess?"