Remembering APS Past President John T. Cacioppo (1951-2018)

October 31, 2018

John T. Cacioppo

John T. Cacioppo was an extraordinary scientist whose incredible mind and determination transformed several areas of psychological science. When I first met him at age 22, when we were both starting graduate school in social psychology at The Ohio State University (OSU), I had no idea how lucky I was or how important John would become to me and to the field in general. Our very first meeting was at the home of our anticipated first-year faculty advisor, Tim Brock. We were sitting around the dinner table conversing when Tim's wife, Sheri, brought out a large tray with the evening's main course — a roast of some sort. As she entered the room, she tripped on the edge of the carpet and the roast flew into the air. John leapt upward, catching the roast with one hand and then offering his other hand to our hostess to prevent her from falling down. While sitting frozen in my chair, all I could think was, "Who is this guy?" Over the next 45 years of our collaboration and friendship, I saw many such incredible (and I mean literally unbelievable, but true) feats that ranged from the academic to the athletic to the personal.

As the world now knows, that 22-year-old budding scholar turned into one of the most recognized psychologists of our generation. I was fortunate to have had a front-row seat to watching John develop from a young and promising graduate student to an international scientific superstar. John is one of those once-in-a-lifetime psychologists whose impact is felt broadly and deeply within the field. His cumulative accomplishments are stunning. Over his all-too-short career he published more than 500 scholarly papers and authored or edited 20 books, and his work has been cited well over 100,000 times. More importantly, many of these works are so inseparable from the field that it is hard to imagine contemporary psychology without them. As one might imagine, his research has been continually funded by millions of dollars' worth of grants from federal and private sources. He gave invited lectures and keynote addresses all over the world, and he won the top awards that psychology has to offer: the

APS William James Fellow Award and the American Psychological Association's Distinguished Scientific Career Contribution Award. He has also won top awards from organizations such as the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), Society for Psychophysiological Research (SPR), Society for Consumer Psychology (SCP), and the Society for Social Neuroscience.

John is not just the recipient of accolades; he also served the profession in critical ways. For example, he was elected president of numerous societies broad and general, from APS to the more specialized SPR, SPSP, and SCP. Although presidencies are sometimes merely honorific, to John the role of president provided an opportunity to do great things. At APS, he wrote powerful thought pieces (presidential columns) and organized international exchanges with various countries, most notably China. At SPSP, he started what became the leading theoretical journal in that field, the *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. As president of SCP, he founded their flagship outlet, the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*. Yet he never took credit for these journals, and most people in these fields have no idea that John was the originator of these now-essential publications.

John's most important early research contributions were efforts in which the two of us were eager collaborators. We spent many nights arguing and debating the postulates of what became the *elaboration likelihood model* (ELM) of persuasion, outlining thoughtful and nonthoughtful mechanisms by which evaluative decisions were made. We disagreed on who was higher in *need for cognition*, a scale we developed aimed at assessing individual differences in the motivation to think (the obviously correct answer is John — despite his protestations). Although we continued to work on aspects of these ideas together until very recently, he mostly moved on to other topics.

Among John's most notable and enduring subsequent contributions were his production of the highly influential multi-edition *Handbook of Psychophysiology* (with Lou Tassinary and Gary Berntson). In fact, Berntson became one of John's most important collaborators (and friends), and they jointly worked on notable papers outlining the importance of multiple levels of analysis in psychology, presenting bivariate models of both autonomic as well as evaluative space and, perhaps most profoundly, introducing the world to a new discipline they called social neuroscience. When John first began to write and talk about studying the brain in connection with social behavior, many in the field were quite skeptical. But John was simply ahead of his time. Now, studies of the brain and social behavior are mainstream and even trendy. This burgeoning interdisciplinary area now has its own society and its own journals and is thriving. Virtually every major psychology department over the past several years has wanted to add someone who works in this area to its faculty.

In the post-Berntson period, John met and fell in love with Stephanie Cacioppo, and this inseparable power couple collaborated in a new domain that John came to call his research passion (though whatever John was working on at the time was pursued with passion) — the psychology of loneliness. John's case for the importance of social neuroscience and multilevel analysis is shown convincingly in this domain of inquiry.

Given these fundamental contributions, it is incredible that John almost didn't become a psychological scientist at all. Indeed, his undergraduate major at the University of Missouri was economics. It was a near-random encounter with social psychologist Lee Becker, an Ohio State social psychology graduate, that ultimately led John to the social psychology program at OSU for grad school, and the rest (as they say) is history. In grad school, John blazed his own path, becoming not only an expert in social

psychology (advised initially by Bob Cialdini and Tony Greenwald) but also psychophysiology (mentored by Curt Sandman). Thus, right from the start John was cutting across traditional boundaries, and he continued to do so until the very end.

The last time I saw John, in October 2017, he was looking good and was incredibly happy. He seemed to have beaten his cancer, and the University of Chicago was giving him one of their highest honors — the Phoenix Prize. Many of John's current and former students and collaborators were present, and the event served as a sort of oral festschrift — an opportunity to honor (and as it turned out, say good-bye to) John during his lifetime.

One can't capture John's brilliance, sense of humor, or complexity in a short essay, but the remembrances below illustrate some of his many qualities and contradictions. In personality, he could be very tough with nearly impossible standards, yet he could also be so incredibly kind and gentle. In personal interests, John loved OSU football, but he also reveled in the fact that the University of Chicago abandoned the sport to focus on academics (a justification he raised repeatedly for leaving OSU for Chicago). All of the memories below are from people who played an important role in John's academic life (these are academic remembrances, after all), but most also had a vital role in his personal life. They paint, in my view, an accurate portrait of a creative and hard-working genius who transformed not only psychological science, but also some of the notable people who engage in it.

Richard E. Petty
The Ohio State University

Barbara Andersen, The Ohio State University

"Is this heaven? No, it's Iowa." He was younger than 30 when he came, a bit of a lonely soul at the time. Yet Iowa is a beautiful place, Iowa City a small, lovely university town, and there was family. His parents lived about 20 miles away in Swisher, where they had retired early to open the Honey Creek Apple Haus. There were grandparents, aunts, and uncles in nearby Cedar Rapids, and he shared his Iowa City apartment with his brother Bob, who was in graduate school. His interests in psychophysiology were strong then and growing by the day. He made the case to the National Science Foundation that training in this new area of study would be vital to the field. Amazingly, NSF funded a series of four summer "boot camps" for established investigators interested in learning "social psychophysiology." The training was intensive for 3 weeks. He was half dead by the time one ended, but he perked up 2 days after the 1986 one when beautiful Christina was born. There were always greater sights on the horizon, however, and in 1988 he became the "spousal hire" (target of opportunity) for the advertised position in clinical that I was offered at OSU. All told, this was a very clever maneuver by the social area and enabled John to continue working with Rich and move more intensely into psychobiology with colleagues Gary Berntson, Martin Sarter, and John Bruno. Our small family expanded in 1991 with the birth of Anthony. To me, Anthony and Christina are his finest contributions.

Gary Berntson, The Ohio State University

I first met John at OSU in Curt Sandman's lab, just after I was hired as an assistant professor in what was then called the Comparative and Physiological division of Experimental Psychology (now Behavioral Neuroscience). He was wearing a farmer-style bib/overall jeans outfit, with no shirt. I was

wearing a sports coat and tie (I have since lost the tie — and he subsequently abandoned the overalls). But we had an interesting exchange, and it was clear that he was not a typical graduate student. I next engaged with him when we at OSU were trying to recruit him from the University of Iowa. The rest is history — we collaborated well and I think significantly contributed to the (at least partial) rapprochement between the social and biological perspectives, and we formalized the discipline of social neuroscience. That was no small feat back then. These days, everyone is a neuro-something. But at that time, there was a tremendous stovepipe animus between social and biological psychologists. John and I recognized the value added by an integrated approach. And it served us well. He would often win arguments between us, at least for the interim, because he could always think faster and speak longer than I could. But I could usually wear him down to reason over time. He was a great colleague.

Mary H. Burleson, Arizona State University

I first met John in 1994 during my postdoctoral training at Ohio State. His lab was big — with three postdocs, four doctoral students, and dozens of undergraduates during much of my stay — and it was brilliant and full of energy, just like John himself. I was very fortunate to join that community. It was intellectually exhilarating and I made lifelong friends. Even among social neuroscientists, John was unusual in being a genuine expert on both autonomic and central nervous system functioning. During my 3 years, we were fully engaged in programmatic research spanning both domains. We spent days, nights, and months scoring EEG and ECG data. There were so many computers in the lab (16 at one point) that we gave them proper names like “Amygdala” and “Left Ventricle” so we could keep straight where our datasets were located.

John practically radiated brainpower. His capacity to integrate diverse information from multiple domains and theorize meaningfully at amazing speed — even during spontaneous conversations — was legendary and awe-inspiring. Yet he was generous with his ideas and thrived on collaboration with both colleagues and students. While I was there, John was a coprincipal investigator on nine federal grants, and based on his CV, he was actively coauthoring at least 42 articles. He was exceedingly busy, expected a lot from his trainees, and did not micromanage, so we learned. John was also exceptionally fair in giving professional credit for the work we accomplished. He had so many compelling ideas. I wish he were still here.

Stephanie Cacioppo, University of Chicago

Some say that “Mozart did not die; he became music.” I believe John T. Cacioppo did not die; he became theory. My husband’s legacy will live on through his seminal work, through all of us whose minds had the privilege of his influence and through our forever-lasting love. John Cacioppo will remain the love of my life, my intellectual hero, my inspiration, and my role model in life and science.

Robert Cialdini, Arizona State University

Early in my career, I accepted a visiting faculty position in Ohio State’s social psychology program, where I was assigned to supervise John Cacioppo, who had recently arrived to join a truly impressive assemblage of doctoral students. (I remember calling a colleague at my home university, Arizona State, and saying, “My God, they have good graduate students here. My God!”) But even among such remarkably able contemporaries, John stood out as possessing a pair of traits that rarely go together. The

first was eagle-eyed attention to detail in all sorts of things. For instance, I was about to send to a key editor an important letter (in which I had abbreviated my professional title) until I showed it to John, who noticed that signing the letter “Robert B. Cialdini, Visiting Ass. Professor” might not be best. I am still grateful to him for that.

The second noteworthy trait was a strong sense of personal confidence that had been built *not* on an exaggerated self-view but, instead, on a recognition that, when he put his mind to something, he would get it right. He once visited me and wanted to drive my car — a 1967 Mustang with a tricky clutch. After he stalled it twice and I volunteered to take over, he laughed quietly and said, “No, I got this,” whereupon he drove that car for the rest of the day, smooth as silk. That was John. He could do almost anything.

Josh Correll, University of Colorado

John could be hard. He demanded a lot of people. But he was also wonderfully compassionate and gentle. I felt blessed to work and argue and just spend time with him, hoping to absorb some of that sparkle. To me, he was a patient guide and constant, formidable guardian. Two examples. In my first year on the faculty at Chicago, I walked into John’s office one afternoon hoping for advice. He said he had an important meeting in 30 minutes but could talk until then. We sat down. I think he could see I was upset. Before I knew it, the time was up. John walked to his desk, made a call and an excuse, and came right back. We talked for 2 more hours. It was dark outside. I apologized for ruining his meeting, but he wouldn’t hear of it. Our conversation was more important, he said. In my last year at Chicago, I told him that I had received an offer from the University of Colorado (my home) and that I thought I had to leave. I knew he had been counting on me to be around, and I saw disappointment flash in his face — but only for a moment. Immediately, his thoughts and feelings turned to what was best for me. He, as always, would handle things. He counseled me to go. I know others will describe his shockingly agile mind. It is a huge part of who he was. But more important to me was his heart.

Stephen Crites, University of Texas at El Paso

“I’ll never ask you to work harder than I do.” I can still vividly remember John saying those words on my recruiting visit to Ohio State nearly 30 years ago. What I did not know at the time was how hard he worked. An example of this was a training visit from an individual installing a system for EEG/ERP research. John met and worked with him Friday night and then took him to a hotel. The next morning John picked him up to continue working, and the individual realized that John was wearing the same clothes because he had spent the entire night in the lab reviewing and working with the system to be better prepared for the training. There were also the countless times when I or one of my peers left the lab around 2:00 a.m. and saw John’s office light on because he had returned to work and the instances when we sent him an e-mail at midnight and received a response 5 minutes later. As I sit here now, I cannot recall a single time when John asked any of us to work harder (and he certainly never asked us to work as hard as he did). What I recall was his passion for science, dedication, and high standards. It was these values and drives that he nurtured and helped to instill in everyone who worked with him.

Jean Decety, University of Chicago

John was a brilliant, creative, and exceptional scholar whose contribution to social neuroscience, a field

that he pioneered a quarter of a century ago, will remain. I was fortunate to have him as a colleague when I joined the faculty at the University of Chicago. He quickly became a friend. John was a superb thinker, a tireless worker always full of energy. I often wondered if he ever slept. I'll always remember a paper we started writing together while waiting for our flight in Auckland, New Zealand. Thirteen hours later, when we landed in Los Angeles, the paper was nearly completed. Some shots of whiskey along the way surely helped. John could also be counted on for wise advice and honest feedback. I remember critical feedback he gave me following a public lecture in Hong Kong. That lecture has never been the same after. John was an eloquent speaker, showering his audience with a torrent of words with his very distinctive voice. His passion and dedication for social neuroscience was contagious. He inspired many students and colleagues to adopt the multilevel perspective (from genes to societies) that he advocated so intelligibly for and applied to his own work. He had a clear vision for psychology, which he liked to describe as a "hub discipline" with a great deal to offer to (and learn from) other disciplines such as biology, medicine, economics, sociology, and political science. When John passed away, I lost a special colleague and a friend with whom to bounce around ideas and explore new territories.

John Ernst, Thomas More College

I was in John's lab as a postdoc in the mid-1990s at Ohio State. We all worked long hours, but no matter how late my lab mates and I left the lab in Townshend Hall, that damn light was still on in his second-floor corner office of Lazenby Hall. It took us a while to figure out that while he was indeed almost always there, sometimes he just left the light on. When I joined his lab I was excited to meet the author, with Lou Tassinary (1990), of "Inferring psychological significance from physiological signals." I didn't know then that it would be the foundation for my thinking on teaching research methods for 20 years. My favorite instantiation of John Cacioppo is in a picture of our lab: The lab members are standing in a row, and John had put up with us hoisting him into our arms and was lounging Cleopatra style. Smiling.

Wendi Gardner, Northwestern University

John was not a foodie until later in his life (a development credited to Stephanie). Indeed, both in his grad school and bachelor days, a common meal consisted of a box of wheat thins and a jar of "Goobers" (peanut butter premixed with neon purple stripes of jelly). I once even caught him happily munching on a bowl of homemade dog food he had mistaken for dip, a running joke against which all future food was compared. The usual academic reward of a meal at a high-end restaurant with visiting scholars was thus clearly less rewarding for John. Fortunately, he was always intellectually (even if not culinarily) omnivorous. Whether their expertise was Buddhist tradition or evolutionary biology, John was as delighted with his table partners' ideas as he was disinterested in dinner. I can recall an interesting conversation about the subjectivity of assigning style points in racing with a decision-making scholar (John's son belonged to a street-racing league in high school) and chatting about the rise of crowd-sourced stories with a publisher (his daughter was involved in the fan-fiction community) and once, and quite memorably, a very animated discussion with a developmental psychologist about the language perception skills of his pug puppy. I too hate stuffy restaurants, but I recall those many dinners fondly, watching John excitedly connect with people regardless of expertise, extending their ideas to encompass the day-to-day life of those he most adored. He was, in those moments, a personal exemplar of his belief in psychology as a hub discipline, weaving together far-flung scientific concepts and connecting them,

always, back to human experience.

Susan Goldin-Meadow, University of Chicago, and Sarah Brookhart, Association for Psychological Science (APS)

John Cacioppo served as president of APS from 2007 to 2008, during which APS celebrated its 20th year, culminating in festivities at the annual meeting in his home base of Chicago. His influence was evident across all APS activities, but among his most lasting contributions are his presidential columns, in which he wrote about psychology as a hub science, the importance of interdisciplinary research, and the evolution of our field into "an integrative, multilevel science."

A decade later, Google Scholar indicates that John's presidential columns collectively have been viewed more than 21,000 times and cited 100 times. Appropriately, the citations appear in nearly every corner of psychology as well as in law, public health, history, and education. His column "A Letter to Young Scientists" was one of the inspirations for a similarly-named column launched by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. John's insightful, elegantly composed essays were prescient regarding the directions psychological science and science more generally have taken in recent years, and they remain relevant and instructive today. His untimely passing makes these columns even more important because his voice and his wisdom live on through them. We end with guidance John offered to those just starting their careers: "Always respect the data, but play with ideas. Feel free to be imaginative with ideas, consider alternative conceptualizations, search for the most useful comprehensive, generative, parsimonious, and falsifiable formulations you can conceive. And when you have succeeded, do it all over again."

Anthony Greenwald, University of Washington

When John was a PhD student in 1975 at Ohio State, he asked me to play racquetball. Because he hadn't played before, I won easily. Within less than a year, however, John was regularly trouncing not only me but everyone else he could talk into playing. That was the first time I became aware of John being unready to stop short of excellence. A year later, John proposed studying the effect of varying heart rate on counterarguing to persuasive messages. I was taken aback by the plan. John wanted to adjust the pacemakers of patients at OSU Hospital's Cardiology clinic. It wouldn't have occurred to me that a cardiologist could be talked into this, but John did it — making for a great dissertation. That was my first view of John's readiness to aim high and persevere where others (including me) would have given up before starting. While still at OSU, John joined Rich Petty in starting one of psychology's all-time successful collaborations. Their model influenced many others, including me.

I last saw John in 2017 when he and Stephanie showed me their laboratory. I saw once again what many others have had the pleasure of witnessing — John's smiling enthusiasm as he explained how the latest EEG technology was achieving never-before-possible understanding of the brain's operation. Combined with the many imprints John left in publication form, the memory imprints he left in the minds of colleagues and students, as he did in mine, will long survive.

Louise Hawkley, NORC at the University of Chicago

When I met John as an incoming graduate student at Ohio State, what struck me was his intensity. From

his penetrating and challenging gaze to his perpetual motion (thumb habitually adjusting a real or remembered ring on his finger between key strokes; tongue tracking his key strokes with quick darts to the left and right), John exuded a force that was both energizing and exhausting. He became my mentor, critic, and advocate. Over the years, I would move from being his student to his lab and project manager to his colleague and collaborator. These were probably the most stimulating years of my life — he opened vistas I was not able to imagine. From John, I learned many lessons about being a scientist — one of the most frequently repeated being the admonition to work from a theoretical foundation so that the bricks (individual studies) would, as stated by Platt (1964), contribute to the temple of science and not be left lying in the brick yard. But probably the most important lesson was what he taught me about perseverance. John did not tolerate "I can't do that." Taking his example, I learned to channel fear for productive scientific ends. Now, when others claim "I could never do that," I say only, "Not if you don't try." Perseverance without fear: It's a lesson he leaves with each of us. I can't help but think of his intense gaze still watching, daring, criticizing, and encouraging us as we persevere in building the temple of science.

Tiffany Ito, University of Colorado

One thing I appreciated about John was that even with all his accomplishments and his large and busy lab, he was focused outward on the vitality of the field as a whole. This included mentoring junior scientists. John had a huge lab when I worked with him as a postdoc at Ohio State (probably at least 30 people when you counted grad students, postdocs, research staff, and undergrads). I had a hard time imagining he would remember what it was like to be starting out, but the advice he gave me in my final year in his lab proved very accurate when I became a new assistant professor. There was also nothing like a research meeting with John, who had the ability to think about an issue from every angle *simultaneously.* You get a glimpse of this in the comprehensiveness of his written work, but that does not do justice to what it was like to watch it unfold before you within a few short minutes.

Cacioppo presented a summary of his research at a 2013 White House workshop, co-organized by APS, that influenced the Obama Administration's creation of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Team to help the government translate scientific findings into solving practical policy problems.

Jeff T. Larsen, University of Tennessee

John Cacioppo took in a stray. Within weeks of moving, I realized that going to Ohio State to study industrial–organizational psychology had been a terrible idea. An undergraduate advisor kept telling me: Talk to Cacioppo, talk to Cacioppo. I hesitated for months, in part because he had a reputation for being intimidating (and maybe even terrifying). I eventually read John's articles in which he explored how brainwaves could shed light on attitudes. I found them fascinating and finally got up the nerve to talk to him. He was intimidating. But he was also warm and he had that big smile and that even bigger passion for science. He invited me to do a trial period in the lab and it stuck. We ended up doing research on ambivalence together, so it is fitting that our relationship was marked by its share of ambivalence. We yelled at each other on occasion, but it was always about ideas. A week after he died, I listened to a podcast interview with John. I heard the passion and the brilliance and I could almost see that big smile. I will admit that I yelled at him once or twice as I listened to the podcast. I wish he could have yelled back. Our 8-year-old was confused and taken aback when my partner tried to explain that John was something of a father to me, but that's how it is. Or how it was. He took in a stray and turned me into a scientist.

Greg Norman, University of Chicago

Throughout graduate school at Ohio State, I heard so many stories about John's intelligence and intensity that he almost sounded mythological, so when I joined his lab as a postdoc at Chicago, I was unsure what to expect. I quickly discovered that John was as advertised; his mind moved lightning fast and this was coupled with an extreme work ethic. John was routinely the first person in the office and the last one to leave, and he still always had the energy to have a conversation about any topic related to science. My time working with John was without question the most intense intellectual experience of my career, and it had a positive influence on nearly every aspect of my life. Although I witnessed countless examples where John's almost superhuman brilliance was on display, I was equally impressed by his willingness to do the most menial of tasks if that was what a project called for. For example, while traveling for a project with the US Army, John came past my hotel room while I was organizing paperwork for the next day of data collection. Without hesitation, he canceled his dinner plans and sat in the room with me for hours placing stickers on documents and licking envelopes. That was John, one of the most brilliant minds in all of science who was not above sitting on the floor and stuffing envelopes if he thought it would help progress the science.

Catherine Norris, Swarthmore College

I first met John at a prospective students' dinner at the University of Chicago. He held me rapt for at least an hour, crouching by my side as I sat on a couch, my plate untouched. I left knowing that I wanted to work with someone who had that kind of passion and love for research.

At the University of Chicago, I was the first student to go through comprehensive exams in the social

program. I was nervous going into the oral defense, knowing that some of my written responses were not as strong as I had hoped. The defense went on … and on … and on … well over the hour that I had been told to expect. By the time it ended and I was asked to leave the room, I was convinced I had failed and they were going to ask me to leave the program. Almost immediately I was welcomed back in with a smile and a firm handshake from John. “Congratulations!” he said. “Do you want to know why we kept you so long? You were doing so well, we wanted to see how far we could push you.” I’ve come back to this moment often lately, and after tough meetings have told my own students that I push them because John pushed me — and it made me better.

Howard Nusbaum, University of Chicago

Anyone who talked to John Cacioppo was impressed by the breadth and depth of his knowledge and personal intensity. When John joined the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago in 1999, he found himself at home in the intellectual intensity of the university. When he joined us, our goal was to rebuild the department of social psychology at Chicago, which had not existed for decades. John came to build an exemplary program in experimental social psychology from scratch. From the outset, we agreed that the program needed to provide graduate training in the fundamental methods, findings, and theories of social psychology, not just social neuroscience. He understood the importance of this for our department in terms of increasing the breadth of scientific training for graduate students but also for the future of the field —advances in social neuroscience depend on a foundation of social psychology. John was an effective and tireless advocate for social psychology and for psychology within the university and in science more broadly. As one of the first pioneers to advocate for the importance of studying the brain and biology in understanding social psychology, he wanted to connect social neuroscience beyond his lab. We started the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience, bringing together the psychological sciences with the biological sciences, political science, sociology, and philosophy. Working with John was constantly educational, thrilling, and challenging. John was a unique scientist and psychologist whose impact on the field and on the people who knew him continues today.

Joseph Priester, University of Southern California

I had the good fortune of taking John’s undergraduate attitudes class at the University of Iowa. The enthusiasm with which he presented the history of attitudes, persuasion, influence, and other areas that he believed should be understood from an attitudes perspective (viz., all of social psychology) was inspiring. The final week of class, during which he integrated everything presented thus far into the elaboration likelihood model, was breathtaking, transfixing, and transformative. I left the class with a love for attitudes and social psychology, but it was John’s kindness and generosity that fundamentally changed my life. I was one of perhaps 100 students in the class, and I had avowed, quite vocally, that I would never pursue an advanced degree. It is inconceivable to me when I think back to those days in 1985, but John would meet with me for 15 to 30 minutes after most classes, discussing how the theories and research covered in class that day related to my position as a director of social services for a local Head Start program. John graciously took time to talk with me, even though there was nothing in it for him other than a distraction from his research. John’s influence continued throughout my life, from his advice to apply to Ohio State for grad school, to our work together on motor processes, continuing through warm and thoughtful emails and conversations until the end. I am grateful and blessed to have known John.

Curt Sandman, University of California, Irvine

In the mid 1970s, a charismatic young man swaggered into my Ohio State office and asked if I would teach him how to measure muscle activity. It was heresy in those days for students from the prestigious social psychology program to consult with members of the radical clinical faculty. Nevertheless, there he was, with his penetrating eyes, infectious smile, and horsey voice asking me to instruct him about EMG. He was interested in the motor theory of thinking and believed that susceptibility to persuasion was a function of the strength of subvocalized counterarguments. He believed subvocalizations could be detected with facial muscles. I agreed with the caveat that he would participate in our psychophysiology studies. He enthusiastically agreed and I gave him hands-on instruction by adding EMG to our studies. Several weeks into his "internship" he brought me a 100-page manual he had written to document details of collecting muscle activity. We published papers from that collaboration describing the consequences of controlled autonomic-nervous-system activity on perception and thinking.

John and I became more than student/mentor. He asked if I played racquetball. I hadn't, but because I had played handball and was a college-level athlete, I assumed I could be competitive. But I have never been beaten as badly at anything. Periodically he came to my house late at night with pizza for conversations extending into the early morning. And there were our weekend football games. Our play was, "John, go deep and I will throw it as far as I can." He did and I did — touchdown!

Gün Semin, Utrecht University

Be it in matters of science or in matters of friendship, John has always been an incredibly loyal, dedicated, and committed person to a fault — a rare breed indeed. His untimely departure has left a gap behind that is impossible to fill and a sense of emptiness in all those who knew him for a long time. The silence he has left behind is profound. We shall remember him by the science he has created together with friends and colleagues with whom he collaborated, the research projects he initiated and pushed, the generous contributions he made to the careers of others, and his exceptional gift of sharing. He may no longer be with us, but his presence cannot be forgotten.

Louis Tassinary, Texas A&M University

I met John in the fall of 1983, just as I was finishing up my dissertation. I was at a crossroads, having been trained as an ecological psychologist yet fascinated by the re-emerging field of social psychophysiology. John accepted me into his lab as a postdoc based on the recommendation of a colleague and a proposal I'd written, and we worked together closely for nearly 6 years. Our first paper took 8 hours to write and every second was a struggle, an impassioned donnybrook over the right concept, the right context, the right word, the right citation. Our last collaboration, together with Gary Berntson, involved far less drama but no less focus. It was always about getting it right. One of our favorite quotes came from John Platt: "We speak piously of taking measurements and making small studies that will 'add another brick to the temple of science.' Most such bricks just lie around the brickyard." John was the only person I've ever known who literally thrust his tongue into his cheek to convey irony. I will miss that expression. I will miss his intellectual tenacity.

Bert Uchino, University of Utah

Everyone who is familiar with John's work knows him as one of the great psychologists of our generation. What people may not be as familiar with is that John was a remarkable mentor who also conveyed broader life lessons. As a graduate student working with John in the 1990s at Ohio State, I certainly learned all the skills and values necessary to be a scholar. However, I also learned life lessons from him that I continue to carry with me and communicate to others. Through his words and actions, John reinforced the importance of hard work, intellectual curiosity, high standards, self-improvement, integrity, compassion, and the need to support others. If I had the space I could go into multiple instances of how he taught and modeled these lessons. To me, John has a much broader legacy that goes well beyond his scholarship and academic training. John positively impacted lives more generally, and I have strived to be a mentor and person consistent with the spirit of his exceptional example.

Eric Vanman, University of Queensland

In 1981, during the summer before I started as an undergraduate at the University of Iowa, I learned that my freshman advisor (assigned at random) was John Cacioppo. I didn't know who he was, and there wasn't a way for me to learn more about him back then. I wrote a letter to Professor Cacioppo expressing my excitement about our first advising session. Amazingly, John wrote a kind letter back saying he looked forward to meeting me. In the next year, John would give me advice about my class schedule each semester, and eventually he invited me to take his course on attitudes. Petty and Cacioppo's classic textbook on attitudes was hot off the press. It was during that course that he invited anyone who had received an "A" on the last exam to come join his lab. I was the only person who went down to the lectern to talk to him, and soon I was sitting next to one of his graduate students collecting psychophysiological data. That led to 4 more fantastic years of conducting research, attending lab meetings, sharing lunches (I remember a long discussion about whether love was indeed "a second-hand emotion," as Tina Turner sang), and being surrounded by the team of talented people John had recruited to join his lab. His kindness to a freshman who knew nothing about the field, and his constant encouragement over those next few years, have had a profound impact on my own career in psychology.

Bill von Hippel, University of Queensland

Early trait theorists would have loved John Cacioppo. He was a force of nature who brought the same intensity to everything he did. When we talked about research he was a buzz of ideas well past the point when my brain was empty and I was just nodding at everything he said. When we played squash he dived for so many shots that he was bruised and bloodied after every match. But my favorite example was from the only time we skied together, when I heard him yell at himself, "John, you chickensh*t, aim your skis straight down the hill!" (Never mind that he was a beginner and the moguls were 3 feet tall). John matched his intensity with an amazing mind, but he was also great fun. I miss him a lot.

Adam Waytz, Northwestern University

I wish I loved anything as much as John Cacioppo loved psychology. I was John's graduate student at the University of Chicago from 2004 to 2009 and never beat him into the office in the morning, nor did I ever see him leave the office before I did (not that it was a competition). This was not some pathological workaholism on John's part or work for work's sake. John simply got endless joy out of what he did. The best piece of advice John ever gave me was the advice truest to who he was: He said that to succeed in what we do, as psychological scientists, we really have to love the work intrinsically. This is because

what we do, John explained, involves constant rejection — funding agencies rejecting grants, journals rejecting articles, conferences rejecting symposia, data rejecting carefully crafted hypotheses. You really have to love the work to endure all that rejection and failure. For John, failure never even felt like failure; it was all fun. A study that yielded confusing or disappointing results was an opportunity to develop a new hypothesis, a new study, a new method, or, as was often the case for John, an entirely new field.

Piotr Winkielman, University of California, San Diego

In John's model of evaluative space, approach and avoidance can co-activate simultaneously. I validated this experientially when postdocing with John at OSU. John could intimidate with his knowledge of psychology, physiology, math, engineering, and philosophy. He loved big words (e.g., we did not study "people in friendly places" but "organisms in salubrious environments"; we strived not for "integration" but "consilience"). Used to a more intimate advising style at the University of Michigan, I was overwhelmed by his huge lab, Monday morning meetings, and weekly progress reports, his talk about "research centers" and "strategic initiatives." Yet behind all this grandeur, I saw a person with a heartfelt passion, genuine vision, and multidisciplinary skills able to elevate psychology to a qualitatively new level. Obviously, John did groundbreaking work on fundamental questions using razzle-dazzle methods. But what stays with me is how mixed he felt about his brainchild — social neuroscience. John was simultaneously excited by its successes and pained by its excesses. He knew how complicated biology is, how naïve it is to look for simple correlates of anything in the body and the brain (see his paper "Just because you're imaging the brain doesn't mean you can stop using your head"). He expressed concerns about replicability of splashy social neuroscience findings. In his domain of emotion physiology, he initiated rigorous meta-analyses that debunked widespread beliefs (e.g., physiological emotion specificity). Oh, and there is one more thing: John saved my academic life, throwing me an intellectual vision and financial lifeline when I needed it most.