IN MEMORIAM

KARL M. DALLENBACH

Dr. Karl M. Dallenbach, Professor Emeritus and formerly Distinguished Professor and Chairman of the Department of Psychology, died in Austin, Texas, December 23, 1971. His dedication to the experimental study of experience, his devotion to teaching, and his sense of justice in administration, will long be remembered by his colleagues, friends, and former students. On the occasion of the award of the American Psychological Foundation Gold Medal in 1966, he was presented with a scroll bearing the following citation: "To Karl M. Dallenbach for his long and distinguished career as investigator, teacher of the investigator's art, influential citizen of our psychological fraternity, academic administrator, and especially for his nearly half century of service as editor of the American Journal of Psychology." In the Commemorative Volume of the American Journal of Psychology in 1958, Boring wrote: "This is then--this Dallenbach Festschrift in his own journal--the occasion when we honor a man of energy, integrity, and persistance, who has already given nearly 50 years of life to the ideal of making psychology scientific."

Karl M. Dallenbach was born in Champaign, Illinois, on October 20, 1887. He was the second of three sons born to John Jacob Dallenbach and Anna Caroline Mittendorf. Perhaps because there were no girls in the family, Karl's mother who had wished for a daughter kept him in dresses and long curls until he was school age at which time he broke away from the feminizing role. In protest of his mother's efforts, Karl was the most aggressive of the three boys, requiring the most discipline and early turning his energies toward
football, a sport in which he excelled in his undergraduate collegiate years. Upon his graduation from Champaign High School in 1906, Karl enrolled in the University of Illinois to prepare for a career in law. His fondness for sciences during this period made him consider a change in direction toward medicine. He avoided courses in psychology because he believed the study connected with phrenology and therefore unscientific. A friend persuaded him that these prejudices were unfounded and Dallenbach signed up for a psychology course in his sophomore year. Here he was introduced to the study which was to engage his prodigious energies for the next half-century and more.

Karl Dallenbach considered three men influential in shaping his life and career--his father, John Wallace Baird, and Edward Bradford Titchener whom he was to meet through Baird who had been Titchener's protege at Cornell. Early in Dallenbach's first semester, Baird selected him to act as subject in matching the colors on samples of Holmgren worsteds in a lecture on testing for colorblindness. The class was soon in an uproar and Baird, a man of humor as well as intellect, was delighted to find that against odds of 24:1 he had picked a man who was colorblind and unaware of his defect.

His visual defect did not prevent Dallenbach from an active career in athletics along with his more scholarly pursuits at the University of Illinois. Football was an important part of all his four years there. In his junior and senior years he won distinction as varsity guard. He continued his participation in the sport during his first graduate year at Pittsburgh (1910). But by the time he entered Cornell in 1911, he had become ineligible for the sport he loved so much.
Having obtained his M.A. at Pittsburgh in 1911, Dallenbach went to Cornell as a SAGE FELLOW. There he came into contact with the third man who strongly shaped his values and influenced the direction of his thinking--Edward Bradford Titchener. During his junior year at Illinois he had attended the series of guest lectures presented by Titchener and been enthralled by the speaker's dynamic personality and British diction. At Cornell, Dallenbach developed a close personal and professional relationship with Titchener, and the distinguished professor became his model in many ways. Dallenbach adopted his beard, his interest in collections and puzzles, his basic social values, his sense of propriety, and his initial formalism. Dallenbach confessed he would also have liked to adopt Titchener's habit of lecturing in a master's gown but never could quite bring himself to it. In addition to his dominance, Titchener embodied a kindliness, an intense interest in the personal welfare of his students, and a capacity for indefatigable meticulous hard work--these attributes too, Dallenbach acquired and exhibited throughout his own long teaching career.

In the summer of 1912 Dallenbach went to Bonn where he studied under Kulpe. He found R. S. Woodworth, on leave from Columbia, already there and despite the 18 year difference in their ages, the two men formed a friendship that persisted throughout their lives.

Dallenbach returned to Cornell where he earned his Ph.D. at the end of his second year there (1913). He planned to return to Pittsburgh and study medicine but, as he later said, "T. would have none of it." The magnetic power Titchener had over his loyal disciples was great enough to cause Dallenbach to set aside his intentions regarding medicine and go to Oregon
where "T" sent him. Dallenbach spent two years at Oregon where he and his bride (Dallenbach married Ethel Leila Douglas, an Illinois classmate, in August 1914) enjoyed the delightful social life of the college community but found his intellectual efforts stifled by lack of available funds for self-initiated research. At this time Titchener told G. F. Arps of Ohio State about Dallenbach and Arps invited him to the University as an instructor. For one year Dallenbach held this position before Titchener "brought" him back to Cornell in the fall of 1916.

This was the year, 1916-1917, when Hugo Munsterberg at Harvard died and Titchener was invited to take the Harvard post, the United States of America was declaring war on Germany and R. M. Yerkes was assuming leadership of American psychologists in an effort to get the right intelligence into the right military job--hardly a time for quiet creative work. Titchener did not go to Harvard (it was rumored because he could not arrange to have compressed air piped into his lecture room) and so was saved for Cornell, but Dallenbach was to see little of him for the next few years. Dallenbach joined the young men going into military service and was able to enter the psychological officers' training camp despite the required examination for color-blindness. The story is that he committed the tests to memory "in an odd moment when they fell into his hand." Commissioned a captain in the Sanitary Corps of the Army Medical Department, he served in various camps in the United States until the Armistice.

He went back to Cornell in 1919 where during the next two decades he produced his most effective research. During this period he began his association with the American Journal of Psychology, the oldest psychological
journal in the world founded by G. Stanley Hall at Clark University in 1887. Learning that Dr. Hall who still owned the Journal had tired of it, Dallenbach went into debt to purchase the publication and bring it to Cornell where it came under the complete control of Titchener and no one was allowed to know about his ownership. If they had not earlier been abandoned, any thoughts of returning to the study of medicine were banished from Dallenbach's mind for he was committed to this new enterprise and in a sense it appeared that the Journal owned him. Initially he had expected other "donors" to share the cost of purchasing the Journal, but none materialized and he remained the sole owner.

Of his own published research, Dallenbach's bibliography includes 14 experimental articles (sole authorship), 53 experimental articles with joint authorship, 9 systematic and historical articles, and 9 biographical sketches. Dallenbach always insisted upon placing the name of his student-collaborator first on articles submitted for publication despite the fact that generally Dallenbach had originated the idea and design, carefully supervised the meticulously scientific experimentation, and just as meticulously edited the writing.

His long Cornell period (1911-1948) was interrupted in 1930-1931 when he served as Visiting Professor in the place of R. S. Woodworth on leave from Columbia. In 1939, Dallenbach was elected President of the Eastern Psychological Association. At the Bryn Mawr meeting, he gave the presidential address on the history of pain. In 1940, he became a Vice-President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Chairman of the Section on Psychology.
Meanwhile the Second World War had begun. As a Reserve Captain, he was ordered to military duty. He served as Chairman of the Emergency Committee in Psychology, exploring ways in which psychology could be of use to the war effort and bringing to the attention of the proper officials the results of the Board's thinking. Eventually, he achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel which he held until he retired in 1948. It is during this period that Dallenbach suffered a great loss. His son John who had volunteered as a pilot was reported missing during a mission over enemy-occupied territory. John was to carry on the tradition. He was to be a psychologist and was already well along on his graduate work when he accepted the call of his country. He was awarded the Air Medal for exceptional achievement, courage, and skill. Dallenbach and his wife later established a John Wallace Dallenbach Memorial Fellowship in Experimental Psychology at Cornell and then another at Texas.

He returned to Cornell from active duty in 1945 and remained there until Texas claimed him in 1948. It was early in that year that Dallenbach, during a visit to the University was invited to give the Sigma Xi lecture on "facial vision," the obstacle sense of the blind, a problem in which he and his graduate students had been working at Cornell. This research series was one of Dallenbach's best pieces of experimental analysis and was definitive in determining the basis of the perception of obstacles. His lecture made a great impression on President Painter who invited him to become a Distinguished Professor at Texas and chairman of the Department of Psychology.

His achievements at Texas were many. It was his unlimited energy, persistence, and dedication that permitted him to accomplish as much as he
did. His heaviest job and most time-consuming one was administrative. Arriving at Texas when clinical psychology was growing rapidly in popularity, he was determined that experimental psychology should be the core of the department—an attitude that went against the current Zeitgeist. Under his leadership the department grew from 6 to 22 faculty members. A new laboratory was designed and a new building constructed. In addition to all these administrative chores, Dallenbach never neglected his teaching. He took on more classes than required. He devoted himself to the introductory course and designed large scale apparatuses to demonstrate the important scientific principles of psychology. He carried the administrative and scientific responsibility for two large contracts with the U. S. Air Force. He alone edited the American Journal of Psychology from 1950-1954; his three co-editors had all given up in 1950.

It was also in this period that Dallenbach made two major public addresses. On August 31, 1951 he gave the presidential address of the Division of General Psychology of the American Psychological Association: "The Place of Theory in Science." On April 16, 1954 he gave the presidential address of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

As an investigator, he devoted his efforts to such relatively neglected areas as olfaction, the skin sense, and attention. In his studies of the sense organs of warm and cold spots on the skin, he contributed to physiological psychology. In his research on forgetting during sleep and waking in humans, and during periods of activity and inactivity on the cockroach, he added immeasurably to the theory of forgetting and to comparative psychology. To developmental psychology, he contributed his findings on the
effects of rotation in children of various ages and the children's acquisition of the meaning of opposites and of the cause-and-effect relationship. To clinical psychology (though he did not recognize it as such), Dallenbach gave the results of his series of studies on "facial vision" in the blind.

As a teacher, he introduced scores of psychologists to the experimental method of psychological research. As a military psychologist, he served his country in both world wars. As an editor, Dallenbach's contributions have been monumental. For over 50 years he owned, managed, and edited the American Journal of Psychology.

His passing is truly a great loss to psychology, to his friends, to all his devoted students, and to the University. Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Ethel Leila Dallenbach, his daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Frisch, and his son, Dr. Frederick D. Dallenbach, pathologist, on the staff of the University of Heidelberg, Germany, and five grandchildren.