HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF
WILBERT J. (BILL) MCKEACHIE

Special thanks to the following individuals who contributed photos for this newsletter:
APA Publishing R. Eric Landrum
Hefer Bembenutty Richard L. Miller
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Bill Hill Loreto R. Prieto

And to those who submitted selfies with their copies of McKeachie’s Teaching Tips

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OBITUARY
Bill McKeachie (1921-2019): Past President of APA and STP

Reprinted from July 2019 issue of this newsletter

Bill McKeachie, Past President of APA and STP, passed away June 12, 2019. In his honor, Eric Landrum and Garth Neufeld have re-released their podcast interview of Bill. You may listen to the podcast by visiting http://teachpsych.org/podcasts.

Bill McKeachie’s family requested that we share the following obituary with members of Division 2.

Professor Wilbert (Bill) J. McKeachie, 1921-2019

Professor Wilbert (Bill) J. McKeachie passed away peacefully in the company of loved ones, on June 12, 2019. He was 97. Dr. McKeachie was an exceptional human being who led a long, rich, and joyful life. He married his college sweetheart, Virginia (Ginny) Mack, with whom he enjoyed 74 loving years in marriage, raised two daughters and enjoyed a granddaughter and a great-granddaughter. He was a devoted family man, a skilled pianist who was passionate about music, a lover of card games, and a legendary softball player and fastball pitcher. Religion always played an essential part in Dr. McKeachie’s life. He and Ginny were active members of the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor for over 70 years.

Born in Clarkston, Michigan in 1921, Bill McKeachie graduated from Michigan State Normal College (now Eastern Michigan University) in 1942, majoring in mathematics and taking three psychology courses. In 1945, following his World War II service as a radar and communications officer on a destroyer in the Pacific, Bill McKeachie enrolled in graduate school at the University of Michigan (UM) to study psychology.

While working as a teaching assistant for introductory psychology, he became deeply curious about the classroom experience. Thus began a research career on the nature of teaching and learning that endured for over 60 years. After earning his Ph.D. in 1949, Dr. McKeachie joined the professorial ranks of UM’s Department of Psychology, where he remained until his retirement in 1992.

Dr. McKeachie’s research focused on the college classroom experience and was among the earliest to examine student anxiety, test anxiety, individual differences among students, gender differences, and students’ feeling about teaching and their teachers. Throughout his astounding career, he published over 30 books or monographs, 122 book chapters, and more than 200 articles. Dr. McKeachie’s most influential and beloved book McKeachie’s Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers, now in its 14th edition, has been translated in many languages and helped college teachers worldwide become better at teaching.

Dr. McKeachie’s deep dedication to the Department of Psychology included serving 10 years as chair and building the department’s excellence and reputation as one of the world’s largest and most prestigious psychology departments. His enduring legacy at Michigan also includes the collaborative founding of the Combined Program in Education and Psychology and establishment of the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching. His monumental service to the profession included numerous leadership roles and presidency of the American Psychological Association (APA), the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, and the American Association of Higher Education.

Dr. McKeachie’s illustrious career was recognized by numerous prestigious awards, and eight honorary degrees. His honors included the APA Award for Distinguished Career Contributions to Education and Training in Psychology and the 1998 APA Gold Medal Award for Enduring Contributions to Psychology and the Public Interest.

Beyond these many contributions, Dr. McKeachie will be always be treasured for his thoughtfulness, generosity, and for the many lives he touched with kindness the world over. He is predeceased by his wife Virginia McKeachie, daughter Karen McKeachie, and sister Joyce Doerner. He is survived by daughter Linda Dicks and her husband Larry Dicks, grand-daughter Erica Wallace, great-granddaughter Addy Carter, brothers Mel McKeachie of Wooster, Ohio, and Duane McKeachie of Flint, MI, and son-in-law Lew Kidder, of Ann Arbor.

A memorial service will be held July 13 at 1:00 pm at the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor, 317 E. Washington Ave, MI. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations may be made to any Division of the American Psychological Association (APA) in memory of Wilbert (Bill) J. McKeachie.
THE YOUNG BILL McKEACHIE

Bill and Ginny McKeachie

Bill in his office at the University of Michigan
Bill McKeachie was a pioneer in teaching psychology on television. Photo from 1951. Also see: McKeachie, W. J. (1952). Teaching psychology on television. *American Psychologist, 7*(9), 503-506. [http://dx.doi.org.proxy.kennesaw.edu/10.1037/h0055173](http://dx.doi.org.proxy.kennesaw.edu/10.1037/h0055173)

Bill served as the 10th President of Division Two of the American Psychological Association (1955-56), which is now known as the Society for the Teaching of Psychology.

1976: 85th President of the American Psychological Association

The Studying and Self-Regulated Learning (SSRL) Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) published two special issues (November 2018 and July 2019) celebrating Bill’s life.
HONORING MY TEACHER: WILBERT J. (BILL) McKEACHIE

By Héfer Bembenuitty, Queens College

In our modern, rapidly changing society, there was a teacher who transcended boundaries, discriminations, segregations, sexisms, ethnicisms, barriers, divisions, and expectations by proposing with his theory, teaching, and research new culturally inclusive, diversified, and integrated teaching approaches and dispositions on the horizon. He was convinced that the new ways for these newfangled teaching landscapes could result in substantially better academic and achievement outcomes for learners at all spectrums while empowering teachers with practical and research-based instructional strategies and teaching tips. The teacher was Dr. Wilbert J (Bill) McKeachie—my teacher.

What can I say about Dr. McKeachie? First, McKeachie entered the teaching field during the late 1940s and early 1950s at the time when theories of teaching were dominated by behaviorism with its belief that learning was controlled by the consequences of rewards and punishments. Supported by the advent of cognitive psychology, with an emphasis on information processing, individual differences, cognitive processes, use of learning strategies, and the understanding that contextual factors play in learning, McKeachie revolutionized teaching.

Supported by his research on teaching and learning, McKeachie emphasized that learners learn in diverse ways and that they construct their knowledge. His research revealed that learning and teaching involved problem-solving, transfer, and critical thinking, and that students’ disciplinary knowledge structures could be measured and improved. McKeachie was one of the first researchers who placed high importance on self-regulated learning in college students by emphasizing the role of learning strategies, motivation, goal setting, self-efficacy, and cognition in situated contexts. He also considered that competition was detrimental to learning and achievement while considering that gender and cultural differences enhanced learning. To McKeachie, teaching and learning are affected by teachers’ beliefs and instruction. His research on test anxiety was pioneering when he described that there were different kinds of test anxious students, each one with different causes and academic outcomes.

What can I say about Dr. McKeachie? Second, it was McKeachie’s passion for embracing equity, diversity, and inclusion that made him so special. He cared about social justice; he disliked inequality, rejected antisemitism, sexism, prejudice, bigotry, and implicit bias. He believed that all human beings are created equal and that each of them deserves the same respect and dignity. He embraced diversity as an essential component of his teaching, research, and professional service. Throughout his career, he supported minoritized, marginalized, and underprivileged learners and teachers. He advocated for equal rights for all teachers and learners, independent of their ability, age, ethnicity, place of origin, nationality, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status and believed in providing children the skills and competence necessary to be academically successful.

What can I say about Dr. McKeachie? Third, I have tremendous gratitude, respect, and admiration for McKeachie. I was fortunate to spend very precious time with him until his last single breath. I had the great privilege of having McKeachie as my mentor, collaborator, and friend. McKeachie was special because of his integrity, kindness, generosity, goodness, honesty, and sincerity. His scholarly work has impacted my students and me. My students did Skype with him and talked over the telephone with him.

What can I say about Dr. McKeachie? Finally, I learned from him to care about enhancing my students’ motivation, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and willingness to delay gratification. I also learned from him the importance of improving education and the essential role individual differences have in the academic achievement of all learners and how essential is understanding students’ cognitive, affective, motivational, and self-regulatory processes. McKeachie was an exceptional human being. McKeachie was my teacher.
Bill McKeachie served on the Steering Committee for the APA National Conference on Enhancing the Quality of Undergraduate Education in Psychology.

Under the leadership of Tom McGovern, Bill and his colleagues on the Steering Committee worked for three years to plan the June 1991 conference at St. Mary’s College of Maryland (now St. Mary’s University of Maryland).

The work of participants of the St. Mary’s conference culminated in the publication of the Handbook for Enhancing Undergraduate Education in Psychology (APA, 1993).

The Handbook was dedicated:

To Bill McKeachie
Player on the Cornell (1951), Michigan (1951), and St. Mary’s (1991) teams; coach to faculty and students of higher education; and scholar, teacher and citizen of psychology.
I WAS MCKEACHIE’S BATTERY MATE (SUMMER ’71)

This sounds as though it might be out of the “Boys of Summer,” but it really is about fast pitch softball in the intramural league at the University of Michigan in the summer of 1971.

I was doing postdoctoral work that summer at the Human Performance Center, and I joined some psychology faculty and graduate students on an intramural softball team. I remember Dan Weintraub, an enthusiastic and energetic player (and pretty good too), Don Polzella, a graduate student, and Robert Pachella, a really good shortstop and hitter. But the heart of the team was Wilbert (Bill) McKeachie, pitcher extraordinaire.

I am not sure how it happened, but a catcher was needed. I had played first base and outfield for my high school team and once caught a game or two, and I was a decent enough athlete, so I volunteered. And that is how I became McKeachie’s battery mate. Bill McKeachie, as I came to learn, was well known in the Ann Arbor area for his pitching skills. He had played many years in the city’s leagues. And I can attest that at age 50 he still had his “stuff.” He was fast and had a tremendous curve, a rise ball, a change-up, and maybe even a drop ball. With this assortment of pitches, we needed signs, and we had them. So I would crouch low behind home plate, flash a sign, be shook off if that was not a pitch that Bill thought was warranted, flash another sign, and the ball would come. I was armed only with my mitt and a mask. I do not remember shin pads or a chest protector, but perhaps those were supplied. Regardless, hitters on the opposing teams did not fare well. We won the league and McKeachie dominated. I have played a lot of softball in the ensuing years but without a doubt that was the most memorable time I have ever had. I can proudly say I was Wilbert McKeachie’s battery mate.

The memory of that summer of softball has stayed with me because it was so much fun, and of course I can make the claim referenced in the title. But there was something else too. When you played with Bill McKeachie you became a better person and a better player. He set the tone by example: be competitive but with humility, win with quiet jubilation, and be gracious and be satisfied with a game well played. And always he smiled.

The last time I saw my battery mate was some 30 years later in 2002 at the Ray Fowler 5k Rat Race held in conjunction with the APA conference. It was in Chicago that year, and when I finished, I looked for Bill, who ran it as well, at age 81. When he finished, I reintroduced myself and we reflected a moment on the summer of 1971.

Addison Woodward
Professor Emeritus, College of Education
Governors State University
by Maggie Thomas, STP’s Editor, This is How I Teach Blog

As an editor of STP’s This is How I Teach blog since its inception, I’ve been able to see some amazing patterns emerge in how teachers of psychology talk about their craft. One of the most noticeable is the influence of Bill McKeachie. We ask every person profiled to answer the same questions, one of which is "What book or article has shaped your work as a psychology teacher?" Fully 15% of our more than 100 profiles have noted the influence of Bill McKeachie and his book on teaching tips. Aside from a handful of mentions for the Teaching of Psychology journal, no other work comes even close to the influence that Bill had with this book. Below, I’ve excerpted a few quotes from STP members about the influence of Bill’s work.

What book or article has shaped your work as a psychology teacher?

Jane Halonen (University of West Florida). The fabulous Teaching Tips by the fabulous Bill McKeachie. I discovered the book in my first year of teaching and practically slept with it under my pillow.

Jessi Hill (Utah Valley University). McKeachie's Teaching Tips (various editions) has been the book that has contributed most to my development as a teacher. It is a wonderful review of the most important concepts related to teaching and is filled with resources should a reader desire to investigate a topic in more depth.

Ana Kehrberg (Muskingum University). As is true for many other educators, McKeachie’s Teaching Tips was the first book I read about teaching. As a teaching assistant before reading his book, I had simply relied on my own knowledge and undergraduate experiences. The book helped me think about how to best teach a wide variety of students, especially those whose educational needs and desires differ from my own.

Sadie Leder-Elder (High Point University). Perhaps the most influential book in shaping my teaching career is McKeachie’s Teaching Tips. It’s an oldie, but a goodie, and it came to me at a time when I was a fledgling teaching assistant, eager to better myself as an educator.

Carolyn Brown-Kramer (University of Nebraska–Lincoln). The very first teaching book I was introduced to, during my first semester of graduate school, was McKeachie’s Teaching Tips. I still come back to it for succinct recommendations backed up with evidence.

Lyndsey Lanagan-Leitzel (Eastern Connecticut State University). As a graduate student at Penn State, I took a course on How to Teach Psychology. The reading material in that course included McKeachie’s Teaching Tips and Perlman, McCann, and McFadden’s two-volume Lessons Learned: Practical Advice for the Teaching of Psychology. These materials ensured that my first teaching experiences as a graduate student were successful, and many of the skills that I learned in that class I have carried with me to this day.

Rory Pfund (University of Memphis). Several articles and books have shaped my work as a psychology teacher. I regularly read articles from journals like Teaching of Psychology, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and Psychology of Learning & Teaching. A few books that I incorporate are entitled What the Best College Teachers Do (Bain), McKeachie’s Teaching Tips, and An Evidence-Based Guide to College and University Teaching (Richmond, Boysen, & Gurung).

Jeremy Houska (Centenary College). I was first introduced to McKeachie’s Teaching Tips back in Wayne’s seminar, and I still pick it from time to time when I need to be reenergized about being a professor.

Alisa Beyer (Northern Arizona University). When I was in graduate school, I read McKeachie’s Teaching Tips (11th edition). It was a great read starting out teaching.

Other contributors who mentioned Teaching Tips: Natalie J. Ciarocco (Monmouth University) Eric Stephens (University of the Cumberlands) Amy Silvestri Hunter (Seton Hall University) Susan Long (Lake Forest College) John Edlund (Rochester Institute of Technology) Dana Dunn (Moravian College) Eric Landrum (Boise State University)
**WILBERT J. MCKEACHIE TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD**

APA Division 2 established its Distinguished Teaching Award program in 1979 and bestowed its first awards in 1980 in four categories: Graduate students, High school teachers, Community college teachers, and College/University teachers. In 1988, the division established the Fund for Excellence to support the annual award program. Bill McKeachie was a primary and significant benefactor to the Fund in its fledgling years. The Board of the Fund recommended that the award for graduate students be renamed the McKeachie Early Career Teaching Award beginning in 1995. The award was renamed the Wilbert J. McKeachie Teaching Excellence Award in 2005 to differentiate it from a newly created award for early career teachers.

Bill McKeachie (left) with recipients of STP’s 2001 Teaching Excellence Awards

**Award recipients (from left to right):**

- **McKeachie Early Career Award**
  - Courtney E. Ahrens

- **Mary Margaret Moffet Memorial Award**
  - Craig W. Gruber

- **2-Year College Award**
  - Tonja L. Ringgold

- **Robert S. Daniel Award**
  - Jeanne Marsh Stahl

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>Maria Lynn</td>
<td>St. Louis University, MO</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Earl M. Williams</td>
<td>University of California, Los Angeles</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Barbara Hofer</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Amy T. Galloway</td>
<td>Northern Michigan University</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>William Douglas Woody</td>
<td>Colorado State University</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Linda R. Tropp</td>
<td>University of California, Santa Cruz</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Courtney E. Ahrens</td>
<td>University of Illinois at Chicago Circle</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Bryan K. Saville</td>
<td>Auburn University, AL</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Erika W. Pohl</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Jason F. Sikorski</td>
<td>Auburn University, AL</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>George M. Slavich</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Trisha A. Benson</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Jeremy Houska</td>
<td>University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV</td>
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<td>Sadie Leder</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Lynne Kenneth</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Robyn Konrad</td>
<td>University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Angela Legg</td>
<td>University of California, Riverside</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>Molly A. Metz</td>
<td>University of California: Santa Barbara, CA</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>Leslie Berntsen</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>Paige Lloyd</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>Rachel Shor</td>
<td>George Mason University, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Kristina Howansky</td>
<td>Rutgers University, NJ</td>
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Bill relaxes during the celebration of the TOPSS 10th Anniversary during APA 2002.

Bill meets with members of the Board for the Fund for Excellence at APA 2006. From left to right: Jim Korn, Elizabeth Swenson, Margaret Matlin.

APA Past President Bill McKeachie with 2004 APA President Diane Halpern, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Bill congratulates Randy Smith, recipient of the 2006 Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award.
The audience acknowledges Bill during the STP Teaching Awards ceremony at APA 2006

Bill speaks to attendees during the STP Social Hour at APA 2001

Bill speaks to Maureen Hester at APA 2006 (Linda Noble is in the background)

Bill and Ginny McKeachie attend Maureen Hester’s retirement party in STP’s hospitality suite at APA 2007
TRIBUTE TO WILBERT J. MCKEACHIE

Virginia Andreoli Mathie
Faculty Emeritus, James Madison University
Former Executive Director, Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology

What a privilege it is to have known Wilbert J. McKeachie. In my view, Bill was the epitome of the scholarly teacher, gentle mentor, and delightful, captivating friend. I started using Teaching Tips when I was a graduate teaching assistant and had a version of it on my bookshelf throughout my teaching career. Whenever I needed help with a teaching-related problem, I always found wise, practical, and helpful advice in Bill’s book. When I met him in person in the early 1980’s, I was awe-struck. He was a giant in academic psychology, yet he was so kind, humble, encouraging, and willing to take the time to talk to me! As I got to know Bill through my involvement in the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP), he soon became a mentor and friend. By his actions, Bill showed me how to be a better teacher and person. I was inspired by the way he listened attentively to people, focused on their ideas and questions, asked them for their opinions, was willing to learn from them, and shared his knowledge and life experiences—shared himself—with others. He motivated me to make every effort to develop and bring these qualities to my own professional and personal life.

One of my most vivid memories of seeing Bill’s leadership skills and dedication to quality education in action was from the American Psychological Association’s (APA) 1991 St. Mary’s Conference on Undergraduate Teaching in Psychology. Bill’s knowledge of and thoughtful reflections on previous national teaching conferences and efforts to enhance teaching and learning, his ability to connect with all participants, and his gentle guidance in addressing the critical questions posed at the conference were invaluable. It was no surprise that the product of the conference, the Handbook for Enhancing Undergraduate Education in Psychology, edited by Thomas V. McGovern (1993), was dedicated to Bill.

Five years later, as chair of the Psychology Partnerships Project (P3), I knew from the outset that I wanted Bill involved in this conference as well. I am indebted to Bill for serving as one of our two consultants. P3, a five-year initiative of the APA’s Board of Educational Affairs and Education Directorate, was designed to promote and facilitate partnerships among psychology teachers from high schools through graduate schools and among psychology teachers and community agencies and businesses. The 1999 National Forum on Psychology Partnerships, held at James Madison University, was the centerpiece of P3. As a mentor to teachers at all of these levels, Bill brought a unique and crucial perspective to the guidance he provided to the steering committee during the planning stages, his contributions to the discussions of the forum’s working groups, and his recommendations on how the groups could enhance the likelihood of success of their proposed projects. Some of the projects that emanated from P3 are still ongoing in one form or another and I believe we owe Bill much credit for this success.

Most importantly, Bill was a cherished friend. I looked forward to chatting with him at STP or APA Council meetings and always took something of value from those conversations. My husband and I frequently had dinner with Bill and Ginny when we were in Ann Arbor. We have fond memories of those occasions, where the talk typically centered around Michigan football, families, music, baseball, and navy life. We are forever grateful to Bill for welcoming our daughter to the University of Michigan the day she moved into her dorm room and “checking in” with her during her freshman year.

I owe Bill so much for all that he taught me and the friendship he shared with me. I miss his big smile, warm hello, and words of wisdom but I am comforted knowing that the extraordinary impact he had on education, especially psychology education, will endure for many years to come.

Reference

The text below was prepared by Garth and Eric upon initial release of their interview with Bill.

Wilbert J. (Bill) McKeachie, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Michigan, is an iconic teacher of psychology. From the time he completed his Ph.D. at Michigan in 1949, until his retirement at age 85, Bill was fully engaged in teaching: encouraging graduate students and colleagues, developing materials to advance pedagogy, and influencing organizations in support of teaching. From its publication in 1950, his *Teaching Tips* has remained in print through 14 editions (now with co-author Marilla Svinicki), helping countless faculty in many disciplines to improve their teaching.

For more than six decades, Bill has been friend to all, from the most famous luminaries—the likes of Skinner, Likert, and Maslow—to beginning students. Along the way his colleagues elected Bill to many leadership positions. He has served as president of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, the American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Foundation, and the American Association of Higher Education; and STP established the Wilbert J. McKeachie Teaching Excellence Award to honor his contributions to the teaching of psychology.

Yet for all the fame his career has brought, Bill McKeachie has remained a model of humility, decency, and humanity. And, as an avid softball player over the years, Bill has often proudly noted that the most significant accomplishment of his APA presidential year (1976) was the fact that he pitched three no-hitters that year.

The image at right is the cover of the book:


Excerpt from the book’s Preface (pages xi and xii):

That the teaching of psychology has evolved as such a highly visible and significant aspect of academic psychology is due largely to the efforts of two pioneers in this field: Wilbert J. McKeachie, whose book, *Teaching Tips*, now in its 10th edition, set the standard for excellence in college and university teaching; and Charles L. Brewer, whose high standards of scholarship played the pivotal role in establishing *Teaching of Psychology*, as a premier academic journal within psychology. Together these two individuals have emerged as undeniable champions of the teaching of psychology.
SYMPOSIUM AND DINNER HONORING BILL McKEACHIE

On November 22, 2019, the University of Michigan’s Department of Psychology hosted a symposium reflecting on Bill’s contributions to psychology and education. The symposium was followed by an evening of art and dining for Bill’s close colleagues and family. (Photos on pages 12-16 courtesy of Jane Halonen.)

Bill’s daughter, Linda Dicks, thanks those who attended

Audience at the symposium

Eric Landrum

Members of the McKeachie family
My name is Jane Halonen and I’m honored to be part of this symposium honoring this extraordinary man.

Like so many others, I first met Bill McKeachie through the pages of *Teaching Tips*. In 1981 I was hired at Alverno College, a small women’s college in Milwaukee that was run by a group of risk-taking Franciscan nuns who decided to abandon grading in favor of a performance-based curriculum. Their experiment became a national curiosity. Not too far into my first semester I realized I didn’t know what the hell I was doing...

Just as you would predict for a budding academic, I went to the library, found the shelf with the “how to teach” volumes, and extracted Bill’s *Teaching Tips*. It saved my life. He had anticipated every problem I had already faced in my short career and offered elegant solutions. It was such a high impact reading that I practically slept with it under my pillow and have regularly returned to it throughout my career to help me solve classroom problems.

We met in person at an APA convention where we both were drawn to the Society for the Teachers of Psychology, Division 2 of APA. Ultimately, we had the opportunity to work together on various APA and STP projects. He always demonstrated strong curiosity about how my college was faring and reliably expressed personal interest in own my professional trajectory.

Like so many people in Bill’s sphere, I pleaded with him to do a teaching in-service at Alverno and he graciously agreed. As I watched him enchant the faculty, I fully realized that he was one of those rare individuals who seemed to be able to teach me something every time I was in his presence, sometimes about teaching, sometimes about being a faculty member, sometimes about life.

Part of his visit was dedicated to completing a biographical interview that would become a chapter in a 100-year celebration of psychology teaching. During his interview Bill kept repeating “I was just lucky” to explain his every achievement. Eric Landrum and I spent yesterday in the McKeachie archives and we both were even more persuaded that luck had little to do with it.

So here are just a few of those important lessons learned from a so-called lucky man:

**Lesson #1. If you are going to play softball, you’d better be on his team.** He may be the only academic I know with his own baseball card. That honor grew out of a game held at ST Mary’s of Maryland in 1988 after a long APA conference day of working on psychology curriculum. I was on the opposing team. I had heard about his prowess, but nothing prepared me for the speed with which that ball crossed the plate. A statement we found in the archives from a Cincinnati philosopher named Campbell says it all: “Your fast ball may have lost a little of its zing, but the opposition still shrinks back in fear with you at the plate.” [We also found an inquiry asking Bill to confirm the rumor that he grilled people about their softball skills before extending an invitation to join the Michigan faculty. He emphatically stated he did not but did elaborate why such a tactic wouldn’t be such a bad idea.]
Lesson #2: Teaching challenges are universal. Languages and cultures may differ, but the problems do not. In 1975, Bill was asked to provide an in-service in the European outreach arm of University of Maryland’s University College, which served the military population. UMUC educators across disciplines gathered in Heidelberg and held a successful meeting to share perspectives. At the conclusion, it was actually Ginny McKeachie who suggested, “You should do this every year.” And they did. Next summer will be the 45th gathering for Improving University Teaching when we will meet in Padua, Italy. An award for scholarly excellence is named in honor of both Bill and Ginny for their contributions.

Bill finagled an invitation for me to provide an IUT keynote address in Hong Kong in 1995 and then asked me to join him in providing a spirited closing session to the conference. During that experience, I swear I had an out of body experience as I looked down on the two of us team teaching thinking, “Can life get any better than this? “

Because of IUT, Bill, Ginny, and I got to experience together many parts of Europe, Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand from which these photos derive. I particularly like the tourist photo of Bill’s operating a flywheel. I don’t know what function he was managing, but the look on his face shows all the childlike exuberance that was his hallmark as he explored new cultures.

Lesson #3: Talk less, listen more. Bill wasn’t anti-lecture but was certainly ahead of his time in arguing for the greater value of taking a student-centered approach and using active learning strategies to produce longer lasting impact, what we might refer to today as learning that sticks. This approach has been at the core of my own research agenda, clearly influencing assessment done well and for the right reasons.

Lesson #4. When you ask a question, wait. Bill loved to share the data of the average wait time for most faculty. We are an anxious bunch, inclined to avoid quiet stretches in our classes. He insisted that students reflect at different paces and those differences warrant greater patience.

Lesson #5. When you can’t answer a question, don’t bluff. Honestly admit that you don’t know the answer. Bill recommended that you can buy some time and gain some hints by asking what prompted the question or you can turn the stumper into an opportunity for the class to exercise good critical thinking skills as they speculate about possible answers.

Lesson #6. Teaching gets harder rather than easier each year. When Bill told me that gem, I was young and foolish and thought, “That can possibly be right.” It was just too counterintuitive. As I settle into my Medicare years, I recognize again just how right he was. With each year our interests become more remote from those of our students. It is harder to keep up with those things that matter most to students in popular culture. Here is a good current litmus test of that principle: Do you know—or care—who Lizzo is? Bill would argue both aspects—knowing and caring about popular culture—become harder to do the older we get and encourage students to perceive us as hopelessly out-of-touch.

Lesson 6. To succeed in professional service organizations, just keep your promises. Bill believed that being true to your word set you apart in dramatic ways from others. Once you have proven you will fulfill your promises, many other opportunities will come your way.

Lesson 7. To build strong careers and strong departments, recognize when people are “pluckable.” Bill contended that individuals who stayed at one institution get a little bored mid-career and may simply need new challenges. The archives were rife with examples of the pluckables he assisted even if that meant those individuals left Michigan for new opportunities. Optimizing opportunity for faculty growth was more important.
Lesson 8. If you think you might cry during a presentation, just tell the people it might happen, then let it go. People, it might happen. Bill may be the most sentimental man I’ve ever known. He easily teared up when things moved him and quite a bit moved him. It didn’t bother him a bit to cry in public. Bill would be tickled about the watery mess we are creating today.

To celebrate so many important contributions to psychology teaching, the Society for Teachers of Psychology wanted to acknowledge his unique service and did so in 2007. We worked with the University of Michigan Development office to install a crabapple tree outside the psychology building and I was so pleased to get the honor of coming for the ceremony. These pictures illustrate the installation. Bill used to give me annual reports on the quality of its blooming. It was a joyous and tearful event, yet my sweetest memory of that visit was Bill making me oatmeal for breakfast on the morning of the event while Ginny and I chatted at the breakfast table.

Like clockwork Bill also used to call me on my birthday to sing happy birthday to me. So I knew when I didn’t get my cherished call in 2018, it was time to come for what I rightly suspected would be our last visit. Time for one final lesson, this time the lesson was about how to exit with joy, grace, and gratitude.

Eric and I have submitted an obituary for Bill to the *American Psychologist* and it is currently under review, but we also wrote an obituary for Bill that has been published in the *Teaching of Psychology*. I’d like to close this portion with the ending we included in that tribute:

> Bill often said, “I was just lucky.” Although luck may have played some role in his remarkable achievements, those who grieve his loss recognize that his dedication, hard work, curiosity, and humanity somehow produced the perfect academic. It is we who were the lucky ones.

Thank you, Bill.
I was incredibly fortunate to be able to learn from Dr. Wilbert J. (Bill) McKeachie through his books (I own three editions of *Teaching Tips*), journal articles, and invited addresses at conferences. I also had the special honor and privilege of getting to know Bill, because among others like Jane Halonen and Hefer Bembenutty, I was one of Bill’s unofficial biographers. In 1999 I interviewed him for an article that appeared in the journal *Teaching of Psychology* (pictured below left), then in 2002 I was able to extend the biography into the opening chapter (pictured below right) in a book of essays in honor of Bill and Charles Brewer, two legendary figures in the teaching of psychology. In February 2018 I was also able to interview Bill in his assisted living facility with my good friend Garth Neufeld for our PsychSessions podcast.

I truly think that Bill McKeachie was the kindest, sweetest, most humble, and most intelligent human to have ever been on the planet. The way he lived his life and the way he cherished those around him was inspirational. I did not see him in person very often, but when I saw him, he always seemed happy to see me! At conferences, a couple of times after someone else’s talk, I was close enough to listen in on those conversations — I swear Bill knew the literature on any topic deeper than anyone he was speaking to, but he never let on and he never showed off.

Bill was (and is) inspirational to me. In fact, he was so inspirational that I became curious about humility, and there was a pocket of time that I studied humility as a research interest, and I developed and published a dispositional humility scale, and in that publication I dedicated the work to Bill — in fact, I had him complete the paper version of the scale, thinking that his responses are the key.

One last story — when I was working on the book chapter about Bill, I knew that he had written an introductory psychology textbook in the 1960s, and I really wanted to see the book, but I was having a hard time finding a copy. I asked him if he had a copy he could share with me, and he sent me one. As it turned out, it was the volume that he had inscribed to his parents when the book was published — with a loving, touching message as you can imagine — and then obviously that volume was returned to Bill after his parents’ passing. I let Bill know that I had this particular volume and I immediately returned it to him, after a good cry on my part of course.

No words adequately sum up Bill McKeachie’s professional contributions to psychology nor his profound positive impact on my personal development as a psychologist.
Dinner Celebration

Hefer Bembenutty (left) hosts the final tributes during the celebration dinner. Patricia Reuter-LoMerenz (right), UM Psychology Department Chair, delivers her tribute.

Linda Dicks pays tribute to her father. Mel McKeachie (Bill's brother) is in the foreground.

Bill’s granddaughter Erica and Jane Halonen

Eric Landrum and William Herman
The Psychology Department of the University of Michigan presented Dr. McKeachie’s daughter, Linda Dicks, a framed photo from the department’s celebration of Dr. McKeachie’s 96th birthday.

Lori Gould, Birgitta Kohlerk, Lisa Boehr, and Héfer Bembrutty played a card game; the game was originally named Murder, but they now refer to it as the McKeachie game.

APA Member, Dr. DeLeon Gray (pictured above right), led dinner attendees in a toast to Dr. McKeachie.
REMEMBRANCES AND SALUTES

As a graduate student at the University of New Hampshire, in 1992, I had the honor and privilege of reading Teaching Tips by Bill McKeachie. I read it during our Seminar and Practicum in the Teaching of Psychology, taught by Victor Benassi, and I was so influenced by the practical, research-based tips the book offered. I took many notes, used the book extensively, and hoped that, someday, I would be able to teach as well as I imagined Bill taught.

Fast forward 6 years, and I was a full time, tenure track faculty member at Lycoming College in Williamsport, PA. I was teaching, doing research and being the kind of faculty member Bill talked about in Teaching Tips. The college decided they wanted to host a conference on College Teaching and was looking to bring in an expert to keynote the event. I suggested, without any hope of it happening, that we bring in Bill McKeachie. After a few minutes of discussion, my colleagues agreed and I was appointed the point person to contact Bill and see if he might be willing to attend, and what his costs were.

When I called Bill, I was struck by the fact that, 1. he answered his own phone, and 2. he said he'd come for no money because "it sounded like fun". He just asked that we cover his travel expenses.

After months of planning, the day of his arrival was upon me, and I was the only person available to pick Bill up from the airport and for dinner. I was, thus, able to spend 5 hours with Bill, without having to share his wonderful sense of humor or his humility. I picked him up at the airport, and he had only one small bag.

We went to the hotel and then to dinner. The dinner was one of the highlights of my professional career. Bill was charming, and told stories of pitching no hitters, as well as of marrying people before he realized he was not fully ordained, and, of course, countless stories of teaching. I was amazed that this person was so well known, so bright, so accomplished, and yet, so kind, thoughtful, respectful, and amazing. The next day, Bill delivered our keynote address, and was brilliant. He talked about how teaching was not using the latest technology, but rather, we should use the tools we have in service to teaching. It was a lesson I share with my colleagues on a regular basis.

Several years later, I was at APA, and I ran into Bill. I was certain he wouldn't remember me, as I am sure he has met literally thousands and thousands of people who considered him to be an icon. Not only did he remember me, but he also asked me about my family (we had talked about it over dinner). This was a man who cared. He cared about teaching and learning, and he cared about people. The world is a slightly less kind place without Bill McKeachie in it.

Chris Hakala
Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship; Professor of Psychology
Springfield College

Heather D. Hussey
Director, Institutional Assessment; Professor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Northcentral University

I was privileged to go through a doctoral psychology program that also heavily focused on teaching. In these practicums is where I was introduced to the "methods behind the madness" or the why we do what we do as teachers. Dr. McKeachie’s work was often part of our assigned readings and greatly laid the foundation from which I learned to teach. He truly was a master of the art!

Heather D. Hussey
Director, Institutional Assessment; Professor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Northcentral University

I never met Dr. McKeachie, but remember carrying around his book when I was in graduate school and read it every free moment I had because that was the only teaching prep I got (until I figured out where to find more support)!

Krisztina Varga Jakobsen
Associate Professor
James Madison University
Prior to 1982, at which time I joined the APA staff, I knew Bill McKeachie only by his most distinguished reputation. Subsequently, among the greatest privileges I had was getting to know Bill McKeachie, the person. A star softball pitcher, church choir member, friend and mentor to so many, one of our greatest scholars on teaching and learning, and a master teacher of master teachers, not only in psychology, but across all disciplines, Bill McKeachie was truly a Renaissance Man if ever there were such. Yet, as accomplished as he was as a scholar and leader among us, his sense of personal humility and genuine interest in and compassion for others was second to none. In the end, he was a person of great spiritual faith who lived that faith in service to his Creator, his country, his family, his profession, and all with whom he worked and lived throughout his life.

Paul Nelson
Former APA’s Deputy Director of Education and director of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education and Training

By the time I began teaching, Bill was already a legend. I knew him only by his book, which was gifted to me as an untrained teacher and novice faculty member. It was only recently that I had the opportunity to meet him at his assisted living facility in Ann Arbor. What struck me most in that interview was not the greatness of Bill's academic achievements, but of Bill himself. In the first few minutes, it was clear to me that Bill had lived a life of kindness and integrity and that those traits persisted. And, while I am completely impressed by all of his professional accomplishments, I am inspired by who Bill was as a person.

Garth Neufeld
Cascadia College
The PsychSessions Podcast

Garth Neufeld took this photo of the University of Michigan’s East Hall auditorium that is named for Bill McKeachie.
The one teaching resource I have used consistently, from the first class I TA'd fifteen years ago to the faculty learning communities I lead now as a faculty developer, is *Teaching Tips*. Other books gather dust on my shelf, while McKeachie's is continually drawn upon to breathe new life into my teaching and that of the faculty I support. He will be missed, but I am tremendously grateful for the legacy he built.

Esther Jordan  
Director, Faculty Success  
Kennesaw State University

My well-worn edition of *Teaching Tips* that got me through *my* early career :) and beyond!

Erin A. Kennedy  
Chair, STP's Early Career Travel Grant Committee  
Department Chair and Professor of Psychology  
Lock Haven University

I was fortunate enough to meet Bill at a conference as I started out on my academic career. Already very familiar with his work (and *Teaching Tips*) at that time, it is no overstatement to say I was thrilled to make his acquaintance, and to share ideas with him. The photo of us is from his visit to serve as a discussion consultant during a TA training workshop I was conducting.

The single, most amazing thing that struck me about meeting, and interacting with Bill over the course of several years, was his utter humility and down to earth nature. His friendly smile, warmth, openness, and respect for all was ever-present. He was always willing to offer his support, time and wisdom concerning the SoTL work his colleagues were doing. I consider myself very lucky to have had the chance to know Bill; he was, and remains, one in a million! (Photo at right circa 2003)

Loreto R. Prieto, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology  
Iowa State University

In my former role as Associate Director for KSU’s Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, I relied heavily on McKeachie’s *Teaching Tips*, not only for improving my own teaching techniques but for training faculty across disciplines on how to improve their teaching.

Tom Pusateri  
STP Executive Director  
Professor Emeritus of Psychology  
Kennesaw State University

McKeachie's *Teaching Tips* was the first book on teaching that I bought as a new faculty member many years ago. I am now a faculty developer and still recommend it all the time!

Hillary Steiner  
Recipient of STP’s 2012 Adjunct Faculty Teaching Award  
Associate Director for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning  
Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning  
Kennesaw State University
2012 STP PRESIDENTIAL CITATION

Presidential Citation
presented to

Wilbert J. McKeachie
August 4, 2012

During the 120th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, the Society for the Teaching of Psychology/APA Division Two is pleased to award you with this Presidential Citation in recognition of your life-long dedication and commitment to psychology and especially to the teaching of psychology.

You have had a long and distinguished career in psychology and have received awards and accolades too numerous to mention here, including eight honorary degrees. You have served in leadership positions at the University of Michigan and within your professional associations, including the presidencies of the American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Foundation and American Association for Higher Education.

From the very beginning of your career in psychology, you have dedicated yourself to the teaching of psychology, to the development of improved curricula, and to research on learning and teaching. Over your career you have given speeches on topics covering curricula, chairing departments, faculty development, faculty evaluation, psychology, and research on learning and teaching, all of which are archived in the Bentley Historical Library of the University of Michigan. Your book Teaching Tips has influenced thousands of beginning and seasoned teachers of psychology. Your contributions to the Society have been long-standing, constant, and significant. You’ve served as STP President and been a consistent advocate for research on teaching and learning and for teacher training, and the Society’s annual teaching award for graduate students is named after you. Your professional and personal kindness and generosity have made you friend and mentor to many members and a model to yet more.

So it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I present you with this Presidential Citation on behalf of your STP/Division Two colleagues, friends, and students. Thank you for making yet another trip to APA so that we could enjoy the privilege of giving you one more justly deserved honor.

Norine Lau Jalbert
APF GOLD MEDAL AWARD

for Enduring Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest

The American Psychological Foundation (APF) Gold Medal Awards recognize distinguished and enduring records of accomplishment in 4 areas of psychology. The 1998 recipient of the Gold Medal Award for Enduring Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest is Wilbert J. McKeachie.

Citation

Wilbert J. McKeachie truly embodies what is meant by psychology in the public interest. Since the beginning of his career, he has been involved in research, innovation, and promotion to improve teaching in psychology, attract students' interest, and motivate students to succeed in their courses and apply what they have learned toward improving the human condition and advancing human welfare. His classic book Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers, first published in 1951 and now in its 10th edition (McKeachie, in press), has been important in fostering the idea that education in psychology can have an impact on human welfare. Before it was politically correct, he supported courses on the psychology of women and was in the forefront of efforts to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in psychology. His contributions to the American Psychological Association (APA) have been outstanding. At various times, he has been president, recording secretary, and parliamentarian. He has been chair of many of APA's major boards and committees. Thus, his entire career can be said to have been devoted to psychology in the public interest, and with great success.


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