

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 world-wide 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.