In Memoriam: Edmund Fantino (1939–2015)

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Our lives are fragile threads of indefinite origin, interlacing with others as they wind along the infinite tapestry of time. Edmund's emerged seven decades ago, danced enchanted patterns with others, then disappeared. The patterns I trace are those of scientist, husband, and father, courageous fighter against illness, raconteur, hiker, enthusiast, and an always warm, humorous, generous, and interested friend.

Edmund was an experimental analyst of behavior par excellence. At one point he was the most prolific author of JEAB articles (around 70), until overtaken by his friend and collaborator, Michael Davison. His first publication studied the relation between the discriminative and conditioned reinforcing strengths of stimuli, a theme of recurring interest. Within a few years, his major theoretical contribution, delay-reduction theory (DRT), took form. It was extended to foraging and other paradigms, in concert with students and colleagues, many of whom became familiar names in our science. DRT is one of the simplest and most robust formulations in our field.

In later years he extended his work to humans, often in concert with Stephanie Stolarz-Fantino. Among other topics they examined many logical fallacies, such as the conjunction fallacy, the sunk-cost fallacy, and base-rate neglect, demonstrating how many of them could be reduced to the operation of basic behavioral principles. In one important experiment, he and colleagues showed that downsizing soft drinks, as attempted by Mayor Bloomberg of New York, could easily backfire if retailers then bundled two smaller sizes, as in that context people would consume more. I think I found it more frustrating than he or Stephanie that such good data and parsimonious explanations could be ignored by the social-economists who preferred more—hypothetical—analyses. Edmund was too busy developing ideas and experiments with his students and colleagues to care much; he played an excellent game, and never voiced irritation, only enthusiasm.

Edmund and Stephanie were soul mates, both in the lab and at home. Like many good relationships, their strengths complemented each other's. They raised their girls, Ramona and Marin, into lovely women, who gave them grandchildren, one named

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Edmund Dante, who fulfilled his last years. They enjoyed hiking together, Edmund and Stephanie often leading Sierra Club outings. I remember swearing to myself to get in better shape on one of the walks they took us on. The hikes were filled with conversation; Edmund had a great memory, and he would recount a life story, showing almost as much surprise as we experienced, wondering at the strange twists and turns that befell an individual, or that individuals befell unto themselves.

They loved music, especially classical, and routinely attended the Mendocino concerts, where they had a summerhouse. On visiting once, I remember accompanying Edmund as he took their desert tortoise Digger on a walk. Digger would follow his nose to fresh dandelions in the woods and not find his way back, thus, the need to accompany. Unlike the Sierra club hikes, these were not fast-paced (perhaps I didn't need to get in shape after all). But they were admittedly less exciting. Edmund was good at multitasking, however (if one could call walking a tortoise a task). He would always have a book to read with him, looking up from it with each turn of the page to check on his, and Digger's, locale.

Edmund developed aggressive prostate cancer at an early age, and determined to fight it as aggressively, and to embrace life as strongly. He paid attention to the world; he determined to read a good book every week, to enjoy sports and theater and friends and research. He wrote about this determination in *Behaving Well: Strategies for Celebrating Life in the Face of Illness*. We should all always strive to be as alive as Edmund always was, and reading this book is a fine guide to that, in health and illness. His passing has left a gap in the fabric that may be closed, but never filled, by his family and friends, and by the lessons of life that he learned and shared, and that I aspire to embody. To know a little more about this singular man, read the appreciation by his student and friend, Alan Silberberg in JEAB. To really know more about him, emulate his energetic engagement in all dimensions of life, his appreciation of things as great as Dante, and as little as Digger.