Preface

This volume contains papers presented at a 2-day conference on the role of the hippocampus in learning and memory. The conference, sponsored by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (MH 33351-01), took place in Williamstown, Massachusetts, on June 25 and 26, 1979.

Although research regarding the role of the hippocampus in learning and memory is abundant, involving many theoretical and experimental approaches, the focus of this conference was rather narrow. The emphasis was on physiological and behavioral investigations that have suggested two functions of the hippocampus in learning and memory: spatial information processing and temporal information processing. By organizing the conference in this way, we hoped to focus our efforts on what we considered to be two influential and contemporary theories of hippocampal function.

During the course of the conference, we attempted to keep a balance between formal presentations and informal discussions. As such, each participant gave a summary of his recent research and views concerning the hippocampal function in learning and memory. Following each presentation, we scheduled equal time for questions and discussion. The final evening of the conference was devoted entirely to a general discussion. Abstracts of all the presentations and complete texts of many of them were circulated in advance of the meeting. The papers in this volume are based on these presentations, revised to reflect the discussion as well as subsequent editorial review.

Although the conference lasted only 2 days, we found that we had to rely on many people to help

plan and conduct the meeting and to help prepare the proceedings for publication. We are pleased to offer our sincerest thanks to them. Shirley Stanton, Bud Fisher, and their staff at the Williams College Summer Conference Center took care of our day-to-day needs. They got us to and from the airport and provided us with food and lodging. It was, to a large extent, their efforts that allowed us to devote our energy to the business at hand. The psychology departments at Williams College and the University of Massachusetts—Amherst helped sponsor the conference. We are especially grateful to Angie Giusti and Ron Halko for cheerfully handling what seemed like endless correspondence. We would also like to thank Dean Frank Oakley for welcoming the group to Williamstown. A number of Williams students served as aides at the conference. Karen Gottfried, Laurie Ingersoll, Russ Kamer, Missy McMahon, Brendan O'Neill, and Donna Staton often took care of in 5 minutes what had eluded us for 5 months. R. S. Feldman took on the thankless task of tape-recording the entire conference. That we are able to present a synopsis of the discussion is largely due to his efforts. We thank him.

Richard F. Thompson agreed early on to publish the conference proceedings as a special issue of *Physiological Psychology*. This was the incentive that many of us needed to get our rough drafts in presentable form. We are grateful to Dr. Thompson for taking this innovative step. We are also grateful to Carol Hibbert and Bonnie Aas for their excellent technical editing. Without their help, we would almost certainly still be working on the manuscripts.

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