David S. Olton *In Remembrance*

David S. Olton, Professor of Psychology, The Johns Hopkins University, died on February 1, 1994. David had recently celebrated his 51st birthday with more than 100 fellow psychologists and neuroscientists who had gathered from around the world to commemorate his life and honor his contributions.

David was educated at Haverford College and at the University of Michigan, where he earned his doctoral degree under the guidance of Robert Isaacson. It was there that David's lifelong interest in the hippocampus was first kindled. In 1969, David accepted a position in the Department of Psychology at The Johns Hopkins University, and in 1982, he was invited to chair the department. His distinguished career was complemented by numerous awards for his exceptional teaching abilities, including the Alpha Phi Favorite Faculty Award and the George Owen Award for Outstanding Teaching and Devotion to Undergraduates.

He was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and he was recently elected by his peers to become a Councilor for the Society for Neuroscience. David published more than 150 peer-reviewed articles and established the radial arm maze as an important tool in the investigation of learning and memory. David was exceptionally clever; one of his

greatest skills may have been his ability to design novel behavioral tasks. In his own lifetime, David's thoughts on the nature of working and reference memory had an enormous influence on our concept of brain function. Recently, his investigations were focused on how aging affects learning and memory.

In addition to his academic pursuits, David was an accomplished sailor, gardener, beekeeper, and cyclist. His greatest joy came from swing and contra dancing. Prior to traveling to meetings, David would always call ahead to determine the location of local dance clubs and then convince his colleagues to join in the fun. Dancing brought considerable happiness to the last few years of his life.

David was exceptionally generous with his time, especially when it came to helping undergraduates and young scientists understand the brain. He also found special pleasure in helping newcomers to his laboratory learn how to conduct science. David's views on research were greatly influenced by the concept of strong inference that was advanced in a 1964 article by John Platt. He frequently made reference to this work and routinely gave copies of it to new students and postdoctoral fellows. David was always interested in considering the alternative hypothesis and was constantly searching for the one crucial experiment that might prove or disprove his latest hypothesis. He was a tireless worker who consistently found time to be a good friend and mentor to many others. David also had a gift for writing. He once drafted his own *Elements of Style* for writing scientific papers; in it he summarized his favorite hints about writing, such as "don't waffle; if something is true, say so," or "put important thoughts first." Personally, David mirrored his approach to writing; he was always very straightforward and honest in his interactions with others. In addition, it was important for David to help his colleagues identify the priorities of their lives and then try to help them achieve their goals, even if it meant not accomplishing his own.

David dealt with his illness with the same tenacity, poise, and intelligence that characterized his life. His compassion, warmth, and intellectual stimulation will be greatly missed by his friends and colleagues. The luster of the scientific community is diminished by the loss of this wonderful scientist, scholar, and gentleman.

Gary Wenk
University of Arizona

Where and When:
An Ode to the Hippocampus

*It seems I've stood at this choice point before,
I looked at the spatial cues the same way then
And I must remember where and when.
Temporal-Spatial codes unlock the door,
The complex spike cells coded info then,
Can their patterns tell me where and when?
What did I do here for the first time?
Should I respond that way again?
I seek my hippocampal mem'ry store,
for space before, for time before,
Now I know where and when!*

—David S. Olton