In Memoriam of John F. Chaves (1941-2008)

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John F. Chaves died in his home on February 2, 2008, after a two year battle with stomach cancer. He was 66 years old. Chaves stood tall as an intellectual giant, not only in the field of hypnosis, but in the arenas of health psychology, the psychological treatment of pain, education in dentistry, and psychological aspects of illnesses. He was a president of Division 30 of the American Psychological Association and of the Missouri Psychological Association. Through his more than 75 publications and professional activities, Chaves helped bring hypnosis well into the mainstream of scientific investigation, where it stands firmly rooted today. He enabled us to see that phenomena that appeared as mysterious as they were perplexing could be accounted for in the same terms we account for mundane phenomena.

Born with cerebral palsy on August 2, 1941 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, doctors told his parents that he would never be able to walk. His parents and sister worked tirelessly to assist him in gaining mobility, and at the age of 6, Chaves began a 12 year tenure as a student at the Cotting School for children with disabilities. He later served for many years as President of the Cotting School Alumni Association, which established the John Chaves Graduation Award in his honor.

Chaves earned his bachelors degree in psychology at Boston University in 1963, his masters (1965), and PhD (1970) at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. His dissertation research was supported by a grant from NASA. Through a fellow graduate student at Northeastern, he learned about the work of Theodore X. Barber, who was attempting to operationalize and scientifically investigate hypnosis. Having a prior interest in philosophy of science—and in particular the work of the Vienna Circle—Chaves became fascinated with how such an elusive and ephemeral concept as hypnosis could be studied in a rigorous way. He visited Barber at the Medfield Foundation and was offered a summer job which eventuated in his first published paper, “Hypnosis Reconceptualized.”

299
Chaves worked intermittently at Medfield for the next 10 years, the last three of which were full time. During his second year there, he invited his friend and fellow graduate student Nicholas Spanos to come to Medfield. Chaves and his colleagues produced many scientific papers while working at Medfield, as well as the highly influential book, *Hypnotism, Imagination & Human Potentialities*, which was published by Pergamon Press in 1974.

By 1975, Chaves realized that he would need to leave Medfield to establish an independent career. Because of his interest in pain and the increasing difficulty of studying pain experimentally, due to ethical concerns, he opted to consider working in environments that would normally face the challenge of pain management. He accepted a position as Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Applied Behavioral Science at the Southern Illinois University (SIU) School of Dental Medicine, and the following year became chair of the Department of Community Dentistry and Human Behavior. It was there that he developed an interest in the education of health professionals, which became the focus of most of his empirical research in later years.

In 1980, Chaves was promoted to professor and continued to serve in various administrative capacities at SIU until 1995, interrupted by a leave of absence from 1983 to 1985, during which he was a Visiting Professor of Psychiatry and Associate Clinical Director of the Pain Management Program at the St. Louis University Medical Center. In 1995, he moved to Indiana University, where he was a Professor of Oral Biology and Head of the Division of Behavioral Medicine and Bioethics in the School of Dentistry. There he was able to pursue his interest in problem-based learning in medical/dental education. In 2003, he became Vice Dean for Dental Education at the State University of New York in Stony Brook, which eventuated in a split administrative position with the Medical School, at which he remained until his health issues forced him to take a medical leave in 2006.

John Chaves made a positive contribution to the lives of many people, as he advanced the frontiers of knowledge with amazing grace. He is survived by his wife B. J. Chaves; his children Eric, John, Kristina, and Victor; and his grandchildren Abigail Chaves, Audra Chaves, Elizabeth Chaves, Elliott Chaves, Emily Wormelle, John Chaves, Justin Chaves, Lauren Chaves, and Michael Chaves.