

William W. Lambert

May 10, 1919 — February 26, 2005

Professor Emeritus William Wilson Lambert was born in Amherst, Nova Scotia on May 10, 1919. He grew up in Taunton, Massachusetts, earned a Bachelor's degree from Brown University, an M.S. degree from the University of Nebraska in 1943, and, in 1950, his Ph.D. degree from Harvard University. Between the M.S. and the Ph.D. degrees, he pursued human engineering problems as a civilian research specialist of the United States Navy. His doctoral studies "hom" at Harvard was the Department of Social Relations, which surely contributed to his extraordinary breadth of interests and accomplishments.

In 1951, Dr. William W. Lambert accepted a professorial appointment in the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell University, and remained there, albeit with many leaves, for the next 54 years. He simultaneously held appointments in the departments of Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology and was often involved in both interdepartmental activities and cross-cultural studies. One interdepartmental outcome was an undergraduate major in Social Relations, which for about 20 years allowed students to combine input from the three departments, and to produce a unified undergraduate thesis. He also found time for administrative activities, serving at different times as Acting Chair of Sociology and Anthropology, and of Psychology, and, for almost six years as the Dean of the Graduate School.

Professor Lambert's teaching spanned many of the major areas of his three departments. There were seminars in anthropology, aggression, cross-cultural topics, and stress. Other courses included biological bases of social behavior, culture and personality, both developmental and educational psychology, individual differences, learning, perception, personality, social psychology, and statistics.

Graduate student mentoring was important to Professor Lambert. He served as the Special Committee chair for sixteen graduate students who earned the Ph.D., and as a minor committee member for another seventeen. His doctoral students went on to distinguished careers, generally at academic institutions. In order to provide support for graduate students during their training, and to help fund research facilities, Professor Lambert actively sought and participated in training grants from both NIH and NSF. The William W. Lambert Laboratory of Social Psychology, located in Uris Hall that houses two of his departments, Psychology and Sociology, was named in his honor.

His publications began in the early 1950s as the outcomes of laboratory experiments (e.g., “Reinforcement and extinction as factors in size estimation” in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*), but by the late 1950s and thereafter, had acquired cross-cultural and social foci, with an interest in emotional aspects of human behavior frequently evident. As an example, in 1958, “A restatement and test of Schlosberg’s theory of emotion with two kinds of subjects from Greece” appeared in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. Many textbooks, book chapters, journal articles, and edited volumes followed over the next 35 years. Especially well known are the 1973 textbook, *Social Psychology*, jointly authored with his brother, Wallace E. Lambert; guides to the Human Relations Area Files that appeared in 1978; the 1979 *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, co-edited with former student Harry Triandis; a series of cross-cultural chapters with former student Allen L. Tan, beginning in 1979, on aggression in children; the six-cultures-project derived 1964 *Mothers of Six Cultures*, authored jointly with Leigh Minturn; and the 1968 *Handbook of Personality Theory and Research*, co-edited with Edgar F. Borgatta. There was an ongoing series of stress-related studies on children, based in Sweden, for which a multiple-authored one, appearing in *Child Development* in 1994, may have been Professor Lambert’s last publication.

During leaves from Cornell, Professor Lambert had appointments at many institutions, including that of a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California; a Fulbright Lecturer at the University of Oslo, Norway; a NIMH Fellow at the University of Stockholm, Sweden; a Rockefeller Professor at the University of the Philippines; and a Guggenheim Fellow and a Fulbright Lecturer at the London School of Economics and the University of Padua, Italy.

He served the international scientific community as President of the Society for Cross-Cultural Research, and as an editorial board member or editor of the journals *Behavioral Medicine*, *Sociological Forum*, *Sociometry*, *The Journal of Human Stress*, and the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. At a national level, he served on NSF and NIGMS review panels.

Beyond all these formal activities and appointments, William W. Lambert had many close friendships at Cornell and elsewhere, a warm family life, and an enjoyment of the arts, and of tennis. Professor Emeritus William W. Lambert died on February 26, 2005 in Arlington, Virginia.

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