

Frank Rosenblatt

July 11, 1928 — July 11, 1971

Frank Rosenblatt died on Sunday afternoon, July 11, 1971, in a boating accident in Chesapeake Bay.

He was born on July 11, 1928, in New Rochelle, New York. He obtained his A.B. from Cornell in 1950 and his Ph.D. in 1956. He then went to Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory in Buffalo, New York, where he was successively research psychologist, senior psychologist, and head of the cognitive systems section. In 1959 he came to Cornell's Ithaca campus as director of the Cognitive Systems Research Program and also as a lecturer in the Psychology Department. In 1966 he joined the Section of Neurobiology and Behavior within the newly formed Division of Biological Sciences, and simultaneously became associate professor.

His research interests were exceptionally broad. One aspect dealt with models of brain function, and in 1958 he described his Perceptron, an electronic device which was constructed in accordance with biological principles and which showed an ability to learn. He developed and extended this approach in numerous papers and a book, *Principles of Neurodynamics*, and he gave an annual course in Brain Mechanisms and Models. In 1966 he added an interest in the transfer of learned behavior from trained to naive rats by the injection of brain extracts, and he published extensively in this area. He also had a serious research interest in astronomy and recently proposed a new technique to detect the presence of stellar satellites.

In 1970 he became field representative for the Graduate Field of Neurobiology and Behavior, and in 1971 he shared the acting chairmanship of the Section of Neurobiology and Behavior.

His other interests included music, which he composed, and liberal politics. His special contribution was the application of computer techniques to political statistics. He was active in the McCarthy primary campaigns in New Hampshire and California, in Democratic reform politics in New York State, and in a series of Vietnam protest activities in Washington. At Cornell he played a major role in the constructive aspects of the upheavals in spring 1969, and he was very active in the Constituent Assembly that set up the University Senate.

He had a deep interest in student affairs and a personal concern which led him to help very many who had difficulties in adjusting to University life. This willingness to help was a feature of all his relationships. We have lost, in his passing, one of the most selfless and sympathetic colleagues, whose good humor and brilliant mind left a deep impression on us all.