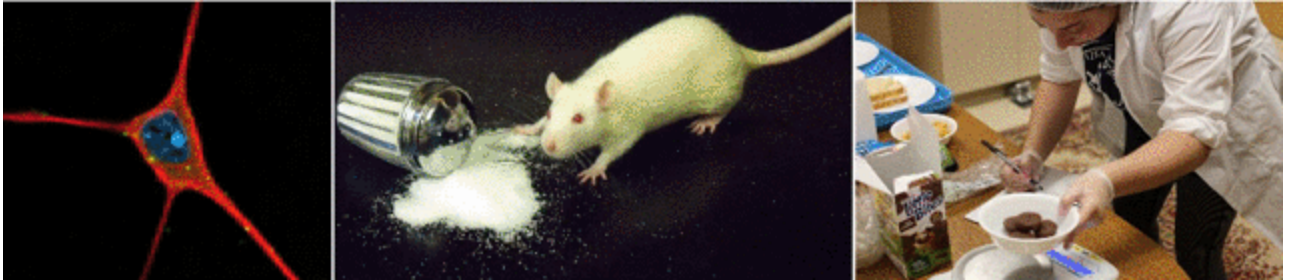




Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior



Dr. Neil E. Rowland

In Memory

On 2 June 2024 the scientific community studying ingestive behavior lost one of its most earnest and prolific members when Dr. Neil Edward Rowland passed away at the age of 77 from a stroke that he suffered weeks earlier. Neil was born on 20 February 1947, two years after the end of World War II. He was raised in Southgate, a small town outside London. As a child he required surgery to repair a heart anomaly. He was determined never to let that condition dominate his life and so he became an avid runner and then, later in life, a cycling enthusiast. For many years, he would wake up at 5:00 AM and run to work at the Psychology Building on the University of Florida campus and then run home at the end of the day, a total of 15 miles.

Neil was the first in his family to attend college receiving his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry with honors at the University College London, where he went on to obtain a Master of Philosophy degree in organic chemistry. At this point he shifted gears and received his Master of Science degree in experimental psychology at Sussex University. He conducted his doctoral dissertation work at the College du France in Paris as part of a French Government Exchange Scholarship which led to his award of a Ph.D. from the University of London. While at the College du France, he worked closely with Stylianos Nicolaïdis and interacted with Jacques Le Magnen, two giants in the field of the neural and physiological controls of food and fluid intake. He conducted his postdoctoral training in the laboratory of Alan Fisher and then Ed Stricker at the University of Pittsburgh. Not surprisingly, his early academic path and experiences formatively shaped his research interests in neurochemistry and ingestive behavior.

In 1981, he joined the faculty of the Department of Psychology at the University of Florida as an Associate Professor, and in 1986 was promoted to Professor. He served as the Director of the Behavioral Neuroscience program from 1990 until 2006 and then became Chair of the department in 2007. He served in that capacity for 7 years and retired from his university position in 2022 but continued to be engaged in the field through his publications.

Throughout his career, Neil maintained funding for his research program from a variety of sources including the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Florida Department of Health, and various research foundations. His scientific passions had a broad scope including topics such as the neurobiology of ingestive behavior, the endocrine and neural controls of thirst and salt appetite and their sensitivity to aging, circadian rhythms, the effects of stress on eating and drinking, the neuropharmacology of taste aversion learning, and the relationship between alcohol intake and hunger and thirst. These interests motivated abundant output rarely seen in scientific disciplines. Neil was author or co-author of over 315 peer-reviewed publications, and he edited or wrote three books, and contributed numerous commentaries, opinions, and book reviews. His work is widely cited.

In addition to his remarkable scientific productivity, Neil was a dedicated teacher to undergraduate and graduate students alike, serving, in some years, as the instructor of record for 4 and sometimes 5 or more courses. He was Chair or Co-Chair of 19 master's committees and was a beloved mentor of 16 PhD students and several postdocs over the years. In fact, he served on a total of 101 graduate supervisory committees in some capacity. He also had a constant stream of undergraduates in his lab who were gaining firsthand experience with behavioral neuroscience research.

Neil was committed to advancing his field by serving it in significant ways. Over his career, he had been a

member of the Editorial Boards of six reputable scientific journals, he was actively involved in over a half a dozen professional societies, and served on grant review panels for the National Institutes of Health. He was a staunch supporter of the Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior (SSIB) and was an early member of its Board of Directors from 1993-1996 and then from 1999-2002. He was also the co-local organizer of the 1999 annual SSIB meeting held in Clearwater, FL. It was at that conference that the celebrated tradition of the dance party, held after the closing banquet, was begun.

While he relentlessly pursued his science, Neil always made time for his family and was a devoted father. Although cricket should have been his sport, it was baseball that captured his heart and he had a gift for coaching little league in a supportive way that embraced all the kids while developing their skills.

He is survived by his wife Sue, his sons Matthew and Nilsson, his daughter Jena, and his seven grandchildren. Neil was a true scholar and a good man. He was the definition of humility and displayed a quiet brilliance. He will be missed by many, but his legacy will endure through his published works, the trainees he fostered, and the children he raised.

-Alan Spector