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## In Memoriam: Don Lewis, 1902-1972

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## IN MEMORIAM

**Don Lewis**  
(1902-1972)



Don Lewis, born in Maricopa County near Mesa, Arizona, in 1902, earned his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at The University of Iowa, and joined the faculty of the Department of Psychology in 1933. Except for short periods as an instructor at Colorado State College, University of Utah, and New York University, Professor Lewis spent his entire professional career at The University of Iowa. While on leave from the University from 1942-44, Professor Lewis served the War Department and Army Air Force as Director or Assistant Director of Operations and of Training Research Groups; he received the Army Air Force commendation for Meritorious Civilian Service for these activities. One of his

later honors was his appointment as Fulbright Senior Lecturer, University of Sydney, Australia, from 1964 to 1965. His professional activities included active participation in Sigma Xi, American Psychological Association, Midwestern Psychological Association, and the Iowa Academy of Science. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Iowa Academy and Chairman of the Finance and Endowment Committee from 1956 to 1963.

From the very first, Professor Lewis, whose early research activity was in the areas of phonetics and psychoacoustics, exhibited a very special interest in the teaching of psychology and a passionate concern for the development of psychology as the science of behavior. Lecturing to very large undergraduate classes in Introductory Psychology, treating with great skill all the varied topics in psychology, Professor Lewis literally became a legend in his own time. Through a rare and highly-effective blend of scholarship and showmanship, his lectures conveyed to students the genuine substance of psychological knowledge, stimulated their enthusiasm, and deepened their understanding of the scientific approach to the study of behavior. In his concern for the total teaching process, from the very careful supervision of teaching assistants, to the development of effective demonstrations and experiments, to the personal counseling of individual students, he established a superior standard for all of his colleagues on this and other campuses.

To his many graduate students, Professor Lewis was both a rigorous tutor and a devoted friend. Recognizing very early the importance of quantitative methods in the evolution of the science of psychology, he sought constantly to develop in students a thorough understanding of the interplay between experimentation and theorizing, and of the key role that mathematics plays in these activities. His text, *Quantitative Methods in Psychology*, published in final form in 1960, and his own research in the area of motor skills, were extremely significant contributions to the field of psychology.

Professor Lewis was always deeply concerned with the personal as well as scholarly development of his students. He and his wife, Thelma, helped many students through the difficult personal struggles associated with graduate study and maintained a very close contact with his students as their careers developed after graduation.

On the passing of Professor Don Lewis on November 21, 1972, the Department of Psychology, The University of Iowa, and the larger academic community, pay tribute to a distinguished pioneer in the development of psychology as a science, to a truly exceptional teacher, and to a respected colleague and friend.