

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

PAUL RANDOLPH FARNSWORTH (1899 – 1978)

Paul Farnsworth was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, on August 15, 1899, and died at his home on the Stanford campus October 27, 1978. He spent most of his youth in Ohio, graduating from the Sandusky High School in 1917. Without pause he went on to Ohio State University, where as an undergraduate he concentrated on psychology and chemistry. His love of music soon overcame his collateral interest in chemistry, however, and as a graduate student he was almost as much involved in musicology as in psychology. Both his master's and doctor's dissertations were on problems of the psychology of music, and he centered much of his research efforts on this field for the rest of his career. His final paper was published in the *Journal of Research on Musical Education* more than a half century after his first, which appeared in the *British Journal of Psychology*. In between there had been three major monographs, nearly a hundred technical articles and reviews, and in 1958 a book that brought his broad interests into focus under the title *The Social Psychology of Music*.

The hundreds of graduate, and thousands of undergraduate, students for whom Paul Farnsworth was almost the symbol of psychology at Stanford might well read that paragraph with amazement. *Music* was not what he meant to them. Although he had several distinguished students in his first half-dozen years at Stanford, the psychology of music did not attract a great following, and much of his research was solitary. His teaching was another matter, however; for every student whom he could interest in music, there were literally dozens, in those early years, whose careers were influenced by his eager and exciting style in the treatment of psychological theory.

Farnsworth came to Stanford in the fall of 1925, a newly minted Ph.D. from the laboratory of A. P. Weiss. He had found graduate work extremely stimulating, for somewhere along the line he had rebelled against an early rearing in formal religion, and Weiss's vigorous behavioristic determinism provided him with a perfect antithesis. His first teaching assignment was introductory psychology, a course which at once became highly respected not only by undergraduates but by faculty colleagues as well. His iconoclastic behaviorism exactly suited the times. Shortly afterward he began offering his course on Modern Viewpoints in Psychology. Here he gave a sophisticated introduction to the historical underpinnings of the various "schools" of psychology. Then came the course on Social Psychology, in which he followed the lead of Floyd Allport toward a behavioristic system. This was a time of intellectual ferment in psychological theory, and Farnsworth was central to this influence among the students at Stanford.

After his first year, Farnsworth married Helen Cherington, an old friend from Ohio, who now became a graduate student in economics at Stanford. Their careers paralleled one another, for after she obtained her Ph.D. degree she became a member of the faculty of the Food Research Institute where she too rose to full professorship. The Farnsworths were one of the earliest

married couples to hold regular faculty positions at Stanford. They built a house on campus in 1930, living there until Helen Farnsworth's death in 1974.

As psychological theory became more scientific and less philosophical in the 1930s, Paul Farnsworth's interest in it flagged somewhat and, like others of his generation, he turned to more substantive areas. In his case, social psychology was the choice, his interest reinforced by a congenial young sociologist, Richard La Piere, who was approaching the field from his own discipline's standpoint. In 1936 they published a textbook, *Social Psychology*, which remained a popular selection through 20 years and three editions.

World War II brought heavy pressures. Farnsworth became acting head of the department for a time, served on many University committees, and was, as always, the department's most burdened - and willing - undergraduate student adviser. In the post-war years, he served increasingly on national committees and boards. He had already been president of the Western and California Psychological Associations, and now he became a member of the American Psychological Association's Council and its Board of Directors. He was elected president of its Division of Aesthetics, and from 1956 to 1968 he was editor of the *Annual Review of Psychology*.

Plagued with chronic attacks of amoebic dysentery in his earlier years, of angina in his later years, and finally with cancer, Paul Farnsworth was nonetheless the cheeriest and friendliest person imaginable. His contagious high-pitched laugh - he laughed on inhalation as well as on exhalation - rang through the department for more than half a century. Sometimes it held promise of a new tidbit of gossip, sometimes an appreciation of someone's victory over authority, and sometimes it was just a sheer explosion of ebullience and good will. You never knew which, but you always hurried in to find out!

Robert R. Sears, Chairman
Quinn McNemar
Richard T. La Piere