



Robert Radlow, Ph.D., Alcohol Tolerance Researcher

Robert Radlow, professor emeritus, Department of Psychology, San Diego State University, died on July 10 at San Diego Hospice in Hillcrest and was buried on July 12 at El Camino Memorial Park in Sorrento Valley. Dr. Radlow was born in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York in 1929. The cause of death was adenocarcinoma, primary site unknown. With excellent medical care and the support and love of friends, Bob was able to experience many enjoyable occasions during his months-long struggle with cancer. He will be remembered for his many scholarly contributions to the study of tolerance to alcohol. Family, friends, colleagues and students will also remember him for his smile, his humor, his intellect, and his love. He was a generous and gentle man who loved life.

Bob's father, Joseph Radlow, died when Bob was only eight and his mother, Dr. Lina Levine, a dentist, supported him and his older brother, James, during the difficult years of the Great Depression. Bob attended Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan and went on to major in mathematics at City College of New York. After hearing a lecture by Gardner Murphy of Columbia University, Bob decided to pursue a career in psychology. He received his Ph.D. in psychology from Pennsylvania State University in 1955 and taught at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro for four years before returning to State College, Pennsylvania on a series of prestigious postdoctoral fellowships. He joined the staff of The Institute for Research at State College in 1961 and served as president from 1964-68. In 1968 he came to SDSU as full professor and taught courses in Social Psychology and Alcohol Theory until his retirement in 1999. In 1989 he was awarded a Meritorious Performance and Professional Promise Award from San Diego State University. He was president of the San Diego chapter of Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society, 1977-78.

As a research psychologist he published many articles in peer-reviewed journals. His major focus was on the relation between acute and chronic alcohol tolerance. Working with data collected from students over many years he developed a theory for temporal changes in tolerance to alcohol and related behavioral effects. His last and most comprehensive theory paper appeared in the journal *Pharmacology, Biochemistry, and Behavior* in October 2006. Dr. Radlow also was a forensic consultant and served as an

expert witness in a number of legal cases involving use of alcohol. He was especially interested in questioning use of "the alcohol excuse" in committing misdemeanors and felonies and published frequently on this topic. Although he was a non-smoker he developed throat cancer in 1998. This cancer did not reoccur and he continued to teach and serve as an "expert witness" with the aid of a voice prosthesis and an amplifier until 2002. At the time of the onset of his final illness he was working on a book about alcohol use and abuse tentatively titled, *Rethinking Alcoholism: Implications of the Existence of Two Forms of Alcoholism*.

Dr. Radlow was the recipient of several research grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, and the Army Research Office, among others. His memberships included American Psychology Association, Western Psychological Association, Research Society on Alcoholism, Society for Personality and Social Psychology, and Society of Psychologists in Addictive Behaviors. He was a strong believer in social justice and was a member and contributor to the Southern Poverty Law Center, Sierra Club, ACLU, and UCAN. He served as co-chair of the grass roots committee that helped preserve Mission Trails Regional Park.

His wife of many years, Janet Brody Esser, is an art historian, and together they traveled extensively throughout Mexico and the U.S./Mexican border region. They also spent long periods in The Netherlands, England, France, Spain, and Italy. Bob was a gold medal recipient in College wrestling in his youth and in later life was a dedicated camper, cyclist, and hiker. He was a talented amateur gardener, mechanic, and photographer. He loved theatre, film, good wine, and good food.

Bob is survived by his loving wife; his niece, Caroline Radlow of Allenstown, New Hampshire; a daughter, Myra Radlow of Irvine, California; and a son, Andrew Radlow of Palo Alto, California. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to San Diego Hospice or Temple Emanu-El in Del Cerro.