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On September 22, 2018, the world lost one of its great psychological problem solvers. After just one short year of retirement life, Bernardo J. Carducci passed away at the age of 66.

Bernie was born May 20, 1952, in Detroit but grew up in California. He attended community college where he aspired to play football. He gratefully credited a teammate who judged Bernie to be the worst lineman in community college football for redirecting his life into psychology (Moss, 2017). After completing degrees at Cal State University at Fullerton and Kansas State, Bernie wanted to return to a lifestyle in California where he could surf, but the tight academic job market narrowed his job pursuits to the Midwest. He was hired at Indiana University (IU)–Southeast to help develop its fledging psychology program. He never strayed from that directive and was generous with praise for the university that allowed him during the course of his career “to be a complete individual as an academic, a teacher, and community citizen” (Greer, 2018).

To help build a robust psychology program, he primarily contributed courses in personality and social psychology but taught nearly any and every course that IU-Southeast had to offer. As a senior psychology faculty member, he was especially proud to teach introductory psychology every fall semester for 37 years, an assignment most experienced psychology staff tend to avoid. He would arrive early to class, nattily dressed, and ready to model his serious commitment to his students’ learning. He was quoted as claiming, “I want them to know I take this seriously. If I don’t take this seriously, why should they?” (Moss, 2017).

Bernie founded the IU-Southeast psychology club and even hosted its first dance. He actively recruited students into research projects and ensured they received full authorship credit for their work. Not only did this practice inspire many students to pursue graduate work, but campus administrators attributed his efforts as establishing undergraduate research as a hallmark of IU-Southeast. He received two awards from the university in recognition of research creativity. As a consequence of his efforts, the number of psychology majors increased dramatically and has been sustained at high levels. Bernie was proud of his affiliation with his department and with the regional university, promoting the value of both at every opportunity.

Many opportunities came his way as the result of his primary research agenda in shyness. As a boy, Bernie read a life-altering article in Psychology Today about the characteristics of shyness. He recognized himself in the article and set a personal course to overcome his own shy tendencies. He began to focus on shyness in high school and college research projects, eventually founding the Shyness Research Institute at IU-Southeast. The Institute started out as a mere mailbox but blossomed into a mission to help shy people develop greater confidence and become more active in the world. By all accounts, he succeeded wildly and wonderfully in that goal. Bernie became recognized across the world as an authority on shyness, resulting in interviews in the Wall Street Journal, Vogue, the New York Times, BBC, Good Morning America, U.S. New and World Report, the Huffington Post, and appropriately, Psychology Today. Colleagues praise his tiny blue book called The Pocket Guide to Making Successful Small Talk as a gold mine that provides everyday lessons in how to be fully engaged “as a social animal.”

Bernie was also an advocate for the scholarship of teaching and learning. His work in the scholarship of teaching and learning focused on effective strategies for preparing psychology majors to get a job after graduation. He was a staunch advocate for the undergraduate psychology degree as a valuable means of preparing a qualified workforce. He regularly spoke in

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regional and national venues about ways to improve learning experiences that would help psychology students better articulate what they could do to impress prospective employers.

Author of six books and innumerable scholarly articles, Bernie was honored as a Fellow in the American Psychological Association. He was elected president of the Council of Teachers of Undergraduate Psychology. He regularly contributed to convention programming for Psi Beta and Psi Chi to help students prepare for job interviews and plan a rich and satisfying life based on their knowledge of psychology. Because of its encouragement of first-generation college students, Bernie maintained a special fondness for Psi Beta.

In addition to his academic contributions, he demonstrated commitment to his community in diverse and interesting ways. Bernie was openly proud of his Italian heritage, serving as president of the Italian American Association of Louisville for nearly 20 years. He led an annual Italian festival in his adopted hometown of Jeffersonville. He was also a founding member of the Derby City Cigar Club. His love of cigars prompted him to cohost a local radio show, Cigar Talk. He thrived on international travel. Bernie enjoyed playing Santa on campus and passing out candy in community parades.

He leaves behind daughter Rozana, son-in-law Seth Taper, granddaughter Caiden Carducci-Taper, and Kathleen Bailey, his companion during the past 17 years. Of all his roles, the ones that stirred the greatest pride involved being a family man and dad. As a son and brother, Bernie did his best to bridge the miles, checking in on the phone and making frequent trips to California as his parents aged. He loved to travel with his mom, sharing adventures with her from Dollywood to Hawaii to London. He also remained connected to his Detroit roots, traveling there often to attend family events and celebrate his Italian heritage. As a dad, Bernie fully engaged in Rozana’s life, celebrating her accomplishments and wiping away tears when she faltered. He loved to plan summer road trips with Rozana when she was young and accompanied her on many college tours during her teen years. He was thrilled that Rozana followed his footsteps into the professoriate and helped her celebrate important academic milestones. As a “nonno,” Bernie talked with his granddaughter, Caiden, every Sunday afternoon via Skype. Caiden looked forward to her Sunday video chats with nonno, enthusiastically sharing her latest adventures, and singing along with Nonno loudly and proudly to cartoon theme songs. Bernie bought Caiden her first bike and loved to chase bubbles with her in the yard on his visits to Boston. Bernie’s infectious smile and zest for life live on in Caiden.

Bernie’s personal style and positivity made him a distinctive colleague and friend. Dubbed “Dapper Dan” by many of his colleagues, Bernie routinely impressed with memorable wardrobe choices including vivid Hawaiian shirts, black and white wing-tip shoes, bright ties, and jaunty fedoras. Whether he was engaged in a riveting symposium, an intimate dinner, or vigorous dancing, his winning smile, indefatigable energy, and inclusive manner gave evidence of his success in both pursuing and inspiring happiness. He was generous with praise, making sure he recognized those who helped contribute to his joyous quality of life, including his students, colleagues, librarians, support staff, and even groundskeepers. All who were lucky enough to spend time with Bernie came away feeling enriched by the experience. He will be greatly missed.

Memorial contributions may be made to IU-Southeast for a scholarship fund in his memory by sending contributions to IU-Southeast, Office of Development, 4201 Grant Line Road, New Albany, IN 47150. Specify “In memory of Dr. Bernardo J. Carducci.”

References
