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CARLOS A. BRUNER ITURBIDE: IN MEMORIAM

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Carlos A. Bruner Iturbide, *circa* 1975
(December 13, 1946 – August 25, 2024).

Carlos A. Bruner Iturbide was a distinguished contributor to the worldwide community of behavior analysts for more than 50 years. After receiving his *licenciatura* with distinction from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in 1968, he attained a Ph. D. degree in psychology under one of the leading scholars of behavioral psychology, Nat Schoenfeld, from Queens College of the City University of New York in 1981. By that time, he already had joined the faculty of the School of Psychology at UNAM, where he held the rank of Professor. Carlos was first recognized as a National Researcher in 1984, when the title was established by the National Research System (CONACYT). He subsequently rose through the levels of recognition to the highest, Level III, a recognition that he continued to hold along with his title of Professor at UNAM until his death. From 1996 to 2023, he also held the highest appointment in UNAM's Program for Academic Performance, a program that recognizes the University's most productive professors and scholars. Over Carlos's long academic

career, his laboratory was known internationally for its steady stream of high-quality behavioral research. That research, which included over 140 scientific articles and chapters and 17 doctoral dissertations, received extensive government and institutional support through the appointments noted above and a variety of other funding sources.

Interacting with Carlos about scientific matters was both a pleasure and a challenge. He took strong positions and defended them with carefully reasoned vigor. Always quick on his feet, his knowledge of the scientific literature and general research acumen were forces to be reckoned with. His research style was especially notable, a style that Bachrach (1962; cf. Skinner, 1956) characterized as "informal theoretical." He was, at the core, a bench scientist, always following his data. Simultaneously, however, he constructed and defended equally strong conceptual frameworks for his experimental work. His first publication in this Journal was based on his doctoral dissertation (Bruner, 1981). In it he analyzed variables determining autoshaping, a topic of considerable interest at the time the article was published. Exemplifying his curiosity and commitment to the inductive method, Carlos explored diverse topics in considerable depth, such as schedule-induced responding, delay of reinforcement, and, in later years, reinforcer accumulation. Along the way, he interspersed these main foci with forays into a host of other topics such as cross-cultural analyses of alcoholism and of suicide, observations on parapsychology, learned helplessness, animal models, the history of behavior analysis, and innovations with behavioral research apparatus. His primary identity and passion throughout his career and until the end of his life, however, was the experimental analysis of behavior. It was the anchor of his life's work.

Carlos's early experiences as a graduate student with Nat Schoenfeld provided him with both his professional identity and approach to research. Outside of Schonfeld himself, Carlos was perhaps the primary advocate and user of the t-tau system of reinforcement schedules (e.g., Schoenfeld & Cole, 1972). The history of this system, as well as its rationale and details, are beyond the scope of this remembrance. (If Carlos were with us, however, he would most graciously explain it all – precisely and with boundless enthusiasm). The system involved using discrete temporal intervals divided into periods of reinforcement availability and nonavailability. Schoenfeld and Carlos asserted that this system simplified and improved on (and replaced) the Ferster-Skinner (1957) system based on both time and response count. Suffice it to say that the system attracted both admirers and detractors.

Carlos's stature as a behavior-analytic scholar, researcher, and teacher was acknowledged by the various communities in which he operated. He was elected the Editor of the Mexican Journal of Behavior Analysis (1996-2000) and President of the Mexican Association for Behavior Analysis (2003-2007). In 2005, he was accorded the singular honor of being selected to serve as a judge for the prestigious National Award in Sciences and Arts (Jurado en el Premio Nacional de Ciencias y Arte), which recognizes the most talented people in Mexico across different disciplines. He was elected as a Fellow of the Association for Behavior Analysis International in 2010. Carlos served on CONACYT, an organization with national responsibility for funding research, supporting students, and evaluating Mexican scientific journals focused on psychology. He also served his university in many capacities, most notably on committees awarding student research support and evaluation of faculty productivity. Examples of the respect he commanded as a scholar and scientist also are to be found in his appointment as a visiting scholar at several universities: West Virginia University in 1993, the University of Guadalajara in 1995-1996, and, in 2001, the National University of Colombia.

Carlos's and Professor Laura Acuña's 38-year personal relationship was exceeded only by their even longer professional one. The latter involved research in the laboratory and field on basic and applied problems in behavior analysis and social psychology. Carlos and Laura, and their beloved pet German Shepards and Boxers over the years, were welcoming and gracious hosts. They shared their home and their country with both Mexican and international visitors. Carlos was an especially thoughtful observer of Mexican culture and history. Conversations were never limited to the experimental and philosophical issues that define behavior analysis, but invariably included his observations about the strengths and frailties of Mexican society and its place in the modern world. He made a special effort to provide not only academically stimulating and productive activities for international visitors to his laboratory, but equally rich exposure to Mexico's history, culture, mystery, and beauty. Often, they were treated to excursions to archeological sites, quaint cities, volcanic ruins, Conquistador-era churches, and exquisite Mexican art exhibits. Visitors left Carlos intellectually stimulated and eager to learn more, both about shared scientific interests and the vibrant and stimulating environment in which he and Laura lived. Carlos's long life was rich in such intellectual, cultural, and social activities. His departure from us leaves the worldwide behavior-analytic community wishing we could have learned more from him but grateful for all that he has given to our science and its practitioners.

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