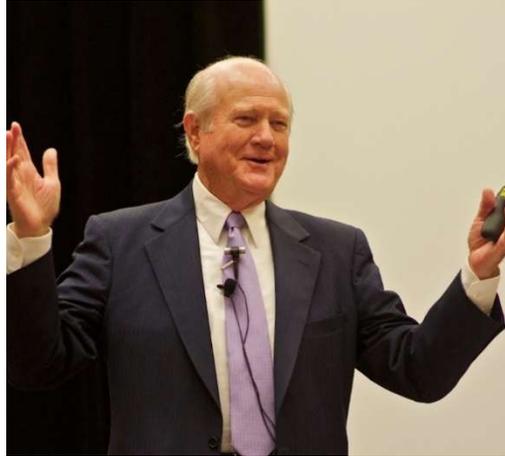


**AUBREY CLISE DANIELS PH. D.**  
**PIONEER IN APPLYING BEHAVIOR IN THE WORKPLACE**

*AUBREY CLISE DANIELS, PH. D.*  
*PIONERO EN LA APLICACIÓN DEL COMPORTAMIENTO*  
*EN EL LUGAR DE TRABAJO*

Darnell Lattal<sup>1</sup>



Aubrey Clise Daniels  
(May 17, 1935 – March 1, 2025)

Aubrey C. Daniels died on March 1, 2025, at age 89. While his passing was not unexpected, I was struck by how dim the morning light appeared out my window. Another giant of our field was gone. He was my colleague, a professional partner, and a friend. He wanted the world to see what could come from the science of behavior that he loved.

His life history was marked by his unwavering commitment to family and friends and his dedication to changing the way the world works when it comes to behavior. He leaves behind an enduring legacy of humor, kindness, generosity, and humility. Working with him was a never-ending delight—exploring how best to translate the basic science into consumable morsels for those far removed from behavior analysis but quick to understand both its utility and its power as a science. In

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1.- With special thanks to members of Dr. Daniels's family.

particular, he is well known for introducing those outside the field to the pragmatic power of positive reinforcement (R+) in accelerating and sustaining good outcomes for individuals and their organizations. His was not a simple application of what sounds like a simple concept. Defined by what happens to behavior, not the intention of others, he brought people from many disciplines into the study of behavior so that they could define and implement conditions on their own that worked for themselves and others.

The science of behavior, including newly explored concepts from the experimental analysis of behavior, was the material that clients mastered as they progressed from early introductions to complex applications across corporate operations and their own lives. He wanted those who supervised others to have the tools of this most optimistic science to address issues as leaders on their own in accelerating learning to accomplish desired performance.

Affectionately known as the Father of Performance Management, Aubrey became a sought-after speaker at major associations, conferences, universities, and educational events. He served on many boards, including the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies, and was an associate at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Dr. Daniels authored six best-selling books, widely recognized as international classics of business management. His textbook *Performance Management* is in its fifth edition and has sold more than 700,000 copies. His book *Bringing Out the Best in People*, now in its third edition, is considered a seminal work in business literature. In 1977, he founded the *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, a peer-reviewed academic journal that continues to be published and is the main source in the field today. His books have been translated into Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and French, and licensed in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Romania, and Saudi Arabia.

Aubrey's way of teaching the science of behavior to anyone who would listen often ended up turning them into passionate advocates of the science and its implications in application. He showed others the danger of easy labels in managing others and how threat and fear as a tool of management could stop accomplishments in others. He liked to see where behavior might go once in contact with the elements that build persistence and passion in striving to reach clearly defined and measured goals—while he always conveyed confidence in every performer he worked with to meet their objectives.

He was a scientist, and his lab was the workplace, where the changes accomplished in the conditions and outcomes of behavior at work were profound. He developed simple translation tools and, in that

application, created ardent advocates of the science. If we continue his honest, direct, and positive teaching methods, understanding the depth by which the power of positive reinforcement can improve how we treat one another and ourselves, that would be, as he expressed his hope to me for what he would be remembered for, a very treasured legacy.

### **Biographical summary**

Born on May 17, 1935, in Lake City, South Carolina, Aubrey was the first of four children of the village barber, Aubrey Oliver Daniels, and a housewife and bank teller, Carrie Belle Hanna Daniels. He attended Lake City High School and graduated in 1957 from his beloved Furman University with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Public Speaking. While studying at Furman, he sang with The Furman Singers, where he met and later married Rebecca (Becky) Tapp, a soloist from Greer, South Carolina, parenting two daughters. As the girls grew up, they found themselves at the center of Aubrey's humorous stories using real-life examples of behavior analysis in action. They survived, and, I believe, thrived by the love reflected in that man's stories.

A month after his wedding, he served a year in Korea in the US Army. Subsequently, he attended the University of Florida, where he earned his master's and doctorate degrees in Psychology and Philosophy (Phi Beta Kappa) and became a devotee of B.F. Skinner. Initially, he pursued a career in clinical psychology, developing a deep appreciation for the principles of behavioral science working with populations in hospitalized settings.

In the 1960s, while serving as chief psychologist at the Georgia Institute of Mental Health, he was asked to develop a hospital-wide treatment program across a 500-bed mental health facility. There, using a token economy, he dramatically reduced the relapse rate (from 76% to 11%) and the length of hospital stay (from months to weeks), further fueling his passion for behavioral science. The organizational challenges in such settings led to his growing interest in how to shape behavior in the workplace. He moved from training supervisors who taught life skills to working as a consultant at textile mills in South Carolina, coining the term "Performance Management." He was co-founder and president of Behavioral Systems, Inc. and, in 1978, founded Aubrey Daniels & Associates, now known as Aubrey Daniels International, where his impact continues to benefit countless individuals and organizations around the world.

Aubrey's many awards include Furman University Alumnus of the Year, the University of Florida College of Health Professionals, and the Association for Behavior Analysis International's award for the

Effective Presentation of Behavior Analysis in the Mass Media, where he was also named a Fellow in 2005. In 1988, he was the first recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the OBM Network.

There are more stories to read about Aubrey and his contributions. If you have not read his books, take a look. His writing offers a wise, humorous, and insightful view of behavior analysis in action and ultimately conveys to all of us our common humanity.

#### References

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