

NOMINATION LETTER ON BEHALF OF DEAN KEITH SIMONTON:

In Simonton's sophomore year at Occidental College, he was designated a College Scholar. This status enabled him to explore topics beyond the formal psychology curriculum. Accordingly, he studied the psychology of religion, comparative psychology, information theory, and creative problem solving. Yet these specialized interests did not preclude the acquisition of a broad knowledge of the field. On the contrary, his score on the GRE Psychology Subject Test exceeded the threshold for the 99th percentile. This combination of breadth and depth continued during his graduate school years. Among the last cohorts of students admitted into Harvard's Department of Social Relations, he took full advantage of opportunities to learn theories, findings, and methods from a broad range of disciplines, including biology, anthropology, sociology, history, and economics. Even so, that wide intellectual foraging did not prevent him from passing his Doctoral General Exams "with Distinction" (i.e., top in class). Not surprisingly, the research program that he developed ended up far more interdisciplinary than usual. Nominally, Simonton earned his PhD in social psychology, but by curiosity-directed education he became a general psychologist whose interests not only spanned several of psychology's subdisciplines but also encroached on kindred social and behavioral sciences. This generalist nature then continued and expanded throughout his career, as is evident in his research, service, and teaching.

Simonton's research is largely devoted to the scientific study of three interrelated topics, namely, genius, creativity, and leadership. These topics are necessarily very broad given that they can assume many different forms in the arts, sciences, politics, and other achievement domains. The topics also naturally branch out into affiliated issues, such as the aesthetics involved in assessing creative products. A necessary repercussion of these features, Simonton has been obliged to rely on a much greater variety of research methods than is the norm in psychology. Besides historiometric techniques, for which he is best known, he has published laboratory experiments, mathematical models, computer simulations, psychometric investigations, secondary data analyses, single-case studies, and interviews – certainly methodological pluralism par excellence! Likewise, Simonton has utilized highly diverse samples, such as creative geniuses from almost every major world civilization (e.g., Western, Islamic, Chinese, and Japanese) as well as underrepresented groups or minority cultures, such as eminent female psychologists or African American creators and leaders, thereby learning what's similar and what's different.

All told, Simonton can claim nearly 600 publications, including 14 books (11 sole authored, 1 edited, 1 co-edited, and 1 author-reprint collection), 162 book chapters in edited volumes (including 55 in handbooks), 56 entries in 30 different encyclopedias, and 354 contributions (178 full articles and 176 commentaries, replies, editorials, interviews, book and film reviews, etc.) in 135 journals, annuals, and other periodicals. Not only does his research appear often in top-tier journals, but their editors also have promoted 46 of his publications as lead articles in such venues as *Psychological Review*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Review of General Psychology*, *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *Psychological Inquiry*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Personality*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, and *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Notably, two separate publications have earned explicit recognition for their contributions to general psychology by receiving Division One's William James Book Award

and its George A. Miller Outstanding Article Award – no doubt a rare achievement. Also relevant to his status as a general psychologist are the Arthur W. Staats Lecture for Unifying Psychology and the Joseph B. Gittler Award for “the most scholarly contribution to the philosophical foundation of psychological knowledge,” both honors bestowed by the American Psychological Foundation. The honors just mentioned do not include the numerous awards – both publication and career – that are dedicated to his contributions to several subdisciplines of psychology. These diverse awards help explain why he is Fellow of a dozen APA divisions (viz. 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 24, 26, 46, and 52). Surely this is more evidence of his being a generalist. Finally, Simonton’s research has been widely cited: 35,296 total citations, with an *h*-index of 92 and *i10*-index of 310. Tellingly, the work that won the James is his single most cited publication while the one that won the Miller is his second most cited journal article. Given that these two honors were decided shortly after publication, the division’s award committees were remarkably prophetic!

Simonton’s professional service started out confined largely to responsibilities most closely connected to his core expertise. For example, just a decade after getting his doctorate, he served as President for APA Division 10 (then named “Psychology and the Arts”). And a dozen years after that he became President of the International Association of Empirical Aesthetics. Yet about a dozen years later his reputation broadened sufficiently for him to become President of APA Division One, where he made some innovations (e.g., completely modifying the division’s website). Moreover, another dozen years later Simonton became President of Division 26, the Society for the History of Psychology, which can also be considered more of a generalist rather than specialist division in terms of the subdisciplines covered (i.e., historiographic methods are applied to any key aspect of psychology’s history). Another manifestation of this progressive growth was his involvement in peer review, whether as ad hoc reviewer, editorial board member, guest editor, associate editor, or senior editor. As a referee, for instance, he has evaluated more than a hundred grant proposals, more than a hundred book proposals, and more than a thousand submissions to well more than a hundred peer-reviewed journals, for an average exceeding two evaluations a month over the course of his career. He has often served on the editorial boards of such general psychology journals as the *Review of General Psychology* and *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. Simonton’s long-term visibility as a researcher in the metasciences (or “science of science”) has even led to him serving many times as the Direct Submissions Editor for the prestigious *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Plus, he has served on, and chaired, multiple committees concerning general psychology, such as those associated with Division One or the American Psychological Foundation.

When it comes to teaching, Simonton’s career as a general psychologist began as an instructor of introductory psychology, an assignment he enjoyed at least once a year. Yet sometime after he got tenure, he chose to shift from teaching introductory psychology to teaching the history of psychology at both undergraduate and graduate levels, where the former was conceived as the “capstone” course for the major. An innovation in both courses was the introduction of the psychology of science as a unifying framework for discussing historical change. To illustrate, in what ways do the major figures in the discipline’s history exhibit the cognitive, personality, developmental, and social characteristics that empirical research associates with exceptional

scientific creativity? Another major transformation in Simonton's teaching was assuming responsibility for the "teaching of psychology," a practicum for advanced graduate students to prepare them for any position that required undergraduate instruction. This was a two-quarter seminar, the first quarter devoted to learning the nuts-and-bolts and then doing practice lectures, the second quarter where the students would team teach a real introductory psychology course. While the graduate students taught and graded the undergraduates, Simonton evaluated the graduate students on their performance – and later provided highly informed recommendation letters when they sought their own teaching positions.

Simonton was undoubtedly an outstanding psychology instructor. His teaching ratings were consistently among the highest in the department, even his undergraduate performance sometimes attaining perfect means of 5.0 on a 5-point scale. Fittingly, he received every teaching award available on his campus, including those offered by undergraduates, fellow professors, and even university alumni. In the latter instance, he won the UC Davis Prize for Teaching and Scholarly Achievement which included a cash award that's considered among the largest of any offered in North American academe. Furthermore, he was honored with the Robert S. Daniel Award for Four Year College/University Teaching granted by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (APA Division 2). Yet beyond formal classroom instruction, Simonton has also played a more informal role as mentor at both undergraduate and graduate levels at universities both national and international. Lastly, he established the UC Davis chapter of Psi Chi and initiated the psychology department's upgraded Honors Program. He then served as faculty sponsor for the former for over 30 years and administered the latter for more than 20 years.

The career of any psychologist undergoes transformations with time. Simonton is no exception, as already suggested above. Yet he underwent another dramatic transition in the years following his retirement. In particular, he became more concerned about making enduring contributions to undergraduate and graduate education. This concern took the form of setting up endowments "in perpetuity." He had already acquired some experience with such donations when he used his UC Davis Prize money to endow the Dean Keith Simonton Prize for Excellence in Undergraduate Research at UC Davis, an annual prize that was eventually expanded from one to four per year. More recently he endowed the Dean Keith Simonton Prize for Creativity in Undergraduate Research, a stipend that supports UC Davis students who are earlier in their research development. Although neither endowment focused on psychology, psychology majors were often the recipients for the simple reason that psychology is by far one of the largest undergraduate majors on campus. The next three endowments were more discipline specific. Two were named after his late wife: the Karen D. Horobin Memorial Scholarship for Child Development Community Service at CSU Sacramento (where she had been professor) and the Karen D. Horobin Graduate Research Support Fund for the Psychology Department at UC Davis (where she earned her doctorate). His most recent donation set up the Dean Keith Simonton '70 Endowed Innovation Fund in Psychology at Occidental College – his alma mater. With the fifth endowment, which impacts undergraduate instruction, Simonton has completely paid it forward.

Looking over Simonton's entire career, whether research, service, or teaching, it's evident that he is worthy of the Ernest R. Hilgard Lifetime Achievement Award.