



## OBITUARY

# David William Fulker (1937–1998) Executive Editor of Behavior Genetics

Professor David W. Fulker died at his home on July 9th, 1998, at the age of 61, after a valiant struggle with pancreatic carcinoma. He was comforted by his wife, Angela, and his daughters, Katy and Rosie, who were with him.

David Fulker was an internationally recognized authority on methods in statistical genetics that could be applied to the study of human and animal behavior. His scientific work was distinguished by pathbreaking methodological and substantive contributions that drew on his unusual breadth of scholarship, originality, and persistence in the pursuit of innovative ideas. He was a Professor of Psychology at the University of Colorado in Boulder, and a Faculty Fellow of the Institute for Behavioral Genetics. In 1996, he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in recognition of his work, and earlier honors included the Dobzhansky Award for Outstanding Research in Behavior Genetics in 1995 and a Distinguished Research Award from the University of Colorado in 1994. His service to the scientific community was reflected in his election as President of the Behavior Genetics Association and, for the past 15 years, his Editorship of the scientific journal, *Behavior Genetics*. His work will live on through the many students who benefited from his brilliance and the clarity of thought that characterized his scientific writing and his teaching.

He began his scientific career in psychology at the University of London, graduating with highest honors in 1964. His interest in genetics took him to the University of Birmingham, England, to study with the leaders of the biometrical genetics school that flourished there. His brilliance manifested itself from the very beginning of his career when his first paper was published in *Science*, arguably the world's leading scientific journal. This first paper placed the study of genetic influences on behavior in an evolutionary context, a theme that was to underlie much of his subsequent work. His doctoral research on the application of methods of biometrical genetical analysis to animal and human behavior was carried out jointly in the Departments of Psychology and of Genetics at the University of Birmingham. This research led to the publication in

1970 of one of the most influential methodological papers in human behavior genetics. The paper set out the basis for the rigorous application of genetic and statistical principles in the design and analysis of human twin, family, and adoption studies. A new generation of researchers followed the lead provided by this paper to develop human behavior genetics as a central component of modern biomedical and biobehavioral research.

Although his professional career began on the faculty of the Department of Psychology in Birmingham, he moved back to London with his appointment as Director of the Animal Psychology Laboratory and Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry, and then Reader in the Psychology of Individual Differences at the University of London. In 1983, he was appointed Professor in the Department of Psychology and Faculty Fellow of the Institute for Behavioral Genetics (IBG) at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where he remained except for his continued visits to and association with the University of London. During his 16 years in Boulder, his research career flourished at IBG. He published prolifically, directed numerous research projects, and made major contributions to multivariate genetic analysis, the genetics of intelligence and personality, regression methodology for the study of heritability and environmental influences in human families, and, recently, the development of new methods for the detection and location of genes that affect the expression of complex traits. This recent work provided analytic strategies that led to the detection of a gene on chromosome 6 influencing reading disability in human families and, in mice, genes for an animal model of anxiety; both these studies were published in *Science*.

Although he spent most of the last two decades in Boulder, he never really felt quite at home away from the excitement of a bustling city. He was drawn back to his native London again and again, most recently in 1996 when he spent a year at the Institute of Psychiatry there and was appointed to the Chair of Statistical Genetics at the University of London.

His later methodological and empirical papers represented the culmination of a scientific career that included outstanding contributions to the study

of animal and human behavior, statistics, and quantitative genetics. In addition to his seminal contributions to human research, many of his publications concerned animal behavior and he consistently emphasized the unity of animal and human behavior genetics. This emphasis anticipated the more recent wider recognition, made possible through molecular genetics, that studies of animal models are an essential component of an overall strategy to understand the genetic underpinnings of human traits. His research also highlighted, through the use of novel experimental designs and analytic approaches, the subtle ways in which genetic and environmental influences may interact in the determination of behavior.

David was an exceptionally generous spirit, especially to the large number of students and colleagues

who, over a 30 year period, were privileged to study under his guidance or work in collaboration with him. His students, colleagues, and friends will have many fond memories of evenings spent enjoying David's company, his sharp wit and occasionally barbed opinions, and his generosity as a host. The one thing he couldn't abide was boredom. That single aversion manifested itself in all aspects of his professional and social life, in his intellectual curiosity and his constant innovation, his love of gourmet food and wine, his enthusiasm for his native city, and his constant search for the best in life. He will be very greatly missed.

John Hewitt