

IN MEMORIAM

John T. Cacioppo (1951–2018)



John T. Cacioppo was the cofounder of the field of social neuroscience and was well known for his transformative work demonstrating how social isolation and loneliness affect well-being. He was also a national leader on matters related to science and health policy. At the University of Chicago, he was the Tiffany and Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor of Psychology, where he served as director of the Social Psychology program and the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience.

John was born on June 12, 1951, in Marshall, Texas, to Cyrus and Mary Katherine (Kazimour) Cacioppo. He received a BS degree (1973) from the University of Missouri in economics and MA (1975) and PhD (1977) degrees in psychology from Ohio State University (OSU). He started his career at the University of Notre Dame before returning to OSU in 1989. In the early 1990s, in collaboration with Gary Berntson, he conducted pioneering work examining the reciprocal relationship between social factors and physiology and their neural underpinnings. In 1999, he moved to the University of Chicago as a professor and codirector of

the Institute for Mind and Biology and remained at Chicago until his death on March 5, 2018.

The author and editor of more than 500 articles and books, John continually engaged in research and professional activities that both encouraged and transcended traditional academic boundaries. Of particular note was his interest in public policy. Key examples of this include his roles as member and then chair of the National Research Council's Board on Behavioral, Cognitive, and Sensory Sciences and his service as a member of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science. In addition, he served on numerous boards and advisory groups and in leadership roles in many professional societies.

John was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a fellow of 19 scientific societies, including seven divisions of the American Psychological Association (APA), the Society of Experimental Psychologists, the Society of Behavioral Medicine, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Royal Society of Arts. He was the recipient of many awards and honors, including the APA Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award, the Troland Research Award from the National Academy of Sciences, and the William James Fellow Award from the Association for Psychological Science.

John loved bringing ideas and people together. He had the talent to bring out the best in people, make them rethink what is possible, and make them want to be better by working together. A math prodigy, he fell in love with science at an early age and with the biology and neuroscience of human nature. He believed that the social and behavioral sciences were central to some of the more compelling scientific questions concerning human existence with potential for its improvement. His work paved the way for a more sophisticated mathematical reasoning of social connections, providing empirical evidence that a meaningful life is a life connected to others.

John's greatest contributions were his children, Anthony and Christina; his undying love for, and partnership with, his wife, Stephanie; and his years of mentorship, friendship, and inspiration for his students, colleagues, and the many others around the world whose lives he touched.

Philip Rubin
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