

Peter D. Eimas, 1934-2005

Peter D. Eimas, 70, Fred M. Seed Emeritus Professor of Cognitive and Linguistic Sciences at Brown University, died Oct. 28 at his home, in Providence, R.I.

Dr. Eimas made influential contributions to the fields of psychology and cognitive science throughout his career. In a seminal article published in 1971 in the journal *Science*, his research team at Brown reported that infants possess sophisticated abilities to perceive speech far earlier than had been thought. This finding spawned a new field of research in infant speech perception and placed him at the center of the “cognitive revolution.”

A hallmark of his research was that he both asked original questions about the linguistic and cognitive abilities of infants and devised creative methods to reveal that they possessed unexpected abilities.

From 1964 to 1996, Dr. Eimas received grants from the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to support his research. He also received a Guggenheim Fellowship and a James McKeen Cattell Sabbatical Award, and he was a Fellow of both the American Psychological Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Eimas published more than 100 research articles, including many influential reviews, and co-edited three research volumes on speech, language, and cognition.

Dr. Eimas greatly influenced the careers of his graduate students, who went on to work in many areas of psychology and cognitive science. He served as a model and mentor to other junior researchers, who relied on him as an advisor and sounding board. His colleagues remember him as a keen and creative intellect with a sardonic wit, always eager to engage with ideas and to pursue their deeper philosophical implications.

Dr. Eimas was born in 1934 in Bridgeport, Conn. He graduated from Yale University and earned his master's degree and doctorate from the University of Connecticut. He taught and conducted research at Queen's University, Ontario, Canada; Williams College, Massachusetts; and Rutgers University, New Jersey, before joining the Brown faculty in 1968.

Surviving are his wife, Joanne L. Miller; his daughter, Leslie Eimas, of Syracuse, N.Y.; and three grandchildren.

Private services were held Oct. 31.

The "Peter D. Eimas Graduate Fund" has been established to support the work of graduate students in Cognitive and Linguistic Sciences. A donation can be made to "Brown University" with a memo noting that it is for the "Peter D. Eimas Graduate Fund," and sent to Brown University Gift Cashier Box 1877, Providence RI 02912.