James D. Dougan (1958–2010)

Thomas S. Critchfield
Illinois State University

James D. Dougan, basic behavior scientist, died on October 10, 2010, at the age of 52. Jim was a longtime member of the Association for Behavior Analysis International and the Society for the Quantitative Analysis of Behavior whose research interests were wide ranging, at various times including reinforcement schedule dynamics, behavioral economics, choice, neuroscience, behavioral pharmacology, comparative psychology, and even zoo-animal behavioral enrichment.

Jim was a creative investigator with a knack for coaxing good experiments out of the most decrepit equipment, but one of my favorite of his efforts did not take place in a laboratory at all. The local zoo was exasperated with its Malaysian sun bears, whose excessive digging was destroying their enclosure and had at

one point even ruptured a city water main located deep underneath. Jim devised a concurrent-operants experiment in which different amounts of food were embedded in plastic pipes and buried in two general locations of the enclosure. Relative time spent foraging in the two locations turned out to be a linear function of relative reinforcer amount, as per the generalized matching law, and the sun bears, now with something purposeful to do, turned out to be no longer destructive. (Unfortunately Jim never got around to publishing this one, which was conducted with J. Outlaw and V. Farmer-Dougan and presented at the 2002 annual convention of the Association for Behavior Analysis International.)

Jim zestfully embraced the things that interested him, and most things interested him, as I learned at our very first meeting. Jim and I had begun new jobs in the same month only about a mile apart, and he welcomed me to town with dinner at his house. Jim's prodigious library, wildly eclectic background music, and before-dinner conversation—his take on the relations among behavior analysis, philosophy (it might have been Hegel), and current events (perhaps the first Gulf War)—left me feeling rather intimidated. Suddenly the music changed, and in mid-sentence Jim was on his feet, flawlessly and unself-consciously rendering the “Time Warp” song and dance number from the musical *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. When the song ended, Jim simply sat, and it was back to Hegel, the only evidence of this musical interlude being the few beads of perspiration on his brow and my jaw lodged squarely on the living room carpet.

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Address correspondence to the author at Department of Psychology, Campus Box 4620, Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois 61790 (e-mail: tscritc@illinoisstate.edu).

I have known few people who could converse intelligently on as many professional topics as could Jim; even fewer who could do this and also find fascination with popular culture and the concerns of everyday people. Science and philosophy defined Jim's professional role but they did not constrain him. Such things as sports, music, fantasy role-playing games, politics, and especially his four children (Erin, Emily, Ellyssa, and Mac) also were among Jim's passions. When away from work, Jim played bass guitar in a rock band and published a blog on current events, popular culture, and politics called "The Hippie Professor" (his counterculture-tinged persona was enhanced by an uncanny physical resemblance to the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia; see photo). Overall, Jim's capacity to move seamlessly from the sublime to the mundane, and to find joy in everything on that continuum, was his greatest gift.

Jim's academic journey began at Whitman College, where he gained a strong background in philosophy and basic science (including experimental behavior analysis). He earned his PhD under the direction of Fran McSweeney at Washington State University, and subsequently completed a post-doctoral fellowship with Bill Timberlake at Indiana University. Jim's entire professorial career was spent at Illinois

Wesleyan University (IWU), where he was an accomplished teacher who involved undergraduate students heavily in his research. Many of those students went on to graduate study in behavior analysis and other areas of psychology. Through frequent collaboration with his wife, Valeri Farmer-Dougan of Illinois State University (ISU), Jim also influenced many graduate and undergraduate students at ISU.

Jim never discouraged an ambitious student project or gave up on a student who wanted to learn. Although unfailingly kind, Jim was also unwilling to let simplistic ideas stand unquestioned. As one former student put it, "Jim loved to make learning active and antagonistic." His courses at IWU, regardless of nominal topic, were known both for confronting challenging philosophical controversies (e.g., those involving free will vs. determinism and cognitive vs. behavior-analytic epistemologies) and for humor that could at times border on the lowbrow (Jim took particular delight in illustrating habituation by slamming his podium down loudly at unpredictable points in the academic term). Jim's students quickly learned, as did I at our first meeting, that you could not enter his company without thinking, and you often left it smiling. May we all deserve such an epitaph.