



JOHN J. FUREDY

JUN 30, 1940 – AUG 24, 2016

Professor emeritus of psychology, University of Toronto, John Furedy joined U of T in 1967, having been educated at the Univ. of Sydney in philosophy and psychology.

His research concerned autonomic conditioning, detection of deception, and nicotine and cognition. He railed against the use of the polygraph as a ‘lie detector’ calling it a ‘psychological rubber hose.’ [See www.antipoligraph.org]. He published over 400 scholarly articles and a book and collaborated with scholars in a number of countries.

He served on the Academic Board for ten years. He was a founding member, and then president, of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (www.safs.ca). He warned against ‘velvet totalitarianism’ and the ‘culture of comfort’ and sought to protect the merit principle in hiring. He believed that truth was reached through the conflict of ideas and vigorously questioned postmodern trends undermining freedom of expression and individuality.

Influenced by libertarian thought, he took a strong stand on freedom of speech. So, in spite of his Jewish heritage and avoiding Nazi deportation from Budapest in 1944, he opposed hate speech laws.

Colleagues and students found him an incisive and critical thinker, determined and principled, able to disagree with opinions without personal animosity, with a sharp wit and a generous spirit. John was devoted to duplicate bridge and a keen tennis player; he loved body surfing and cross-country skiing. He cycled to work summer and winter, wearing a Hawaiian shirt, his first task being to arrange the lunchtime bridge game.

In 2005 he and his wife Christine returned to Sydney to live by the harbour.

John lived, and bravely died, by Socrates’ dictum “the unexamined life is not worth living.”

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<http://v1.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/Deaths.20160910.93379193/BDAStory/BDA/deaths>