

## Albert J. Harris Remembered

Dr. Albert J. Harris, who grew up in Boston, received his B.A. magna cum laude in psychology from Harvard in 1928 and the same year was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Two years later, the same institution awarded him a Ph.D. in psychology. Given this academic background, it is not surprising that Dr. Harris later became an APA fellow in clinical psychology, school psychology, educational psychology, and counseling psychology.

His first academic appointment was as an instructor in psychology at Purdue in 1930, and Dr. Harris next served in a similar position at Simmons College. After a short stint as a psychologist at Worcester State Hospital, Massachusetts, he returned to academia in 1934 as an assistant professor. During the next 15 years at Queens College, New York, he taught and was a clinical psychologist in the Educational Clinic, and the supervisor of the Remedial Reading Service. It was during this time in his career that Dr. Harris met Arthur Gates, who was also an early leader in the field of Reading. In 1949, Dr. Harris was promoted to associate professor, and two years later to full professor, at the City College of New York. Prior to his retirement in 1968 from CCNY, Dr. Harris served as Director of the Educational Clinic, and later as the Director of the Office of Research and Evaluation (Division of Teacher Education) for City College. Among the institutions at which he taught during the summer were the Universities of Kansas, Michigan, Washington, Chicago, Cornell, Indiana and Wisconsin.

Dr. Harris held a number of offices in professional organizations. For example, he served as president of the APA's Division of School Psychology, the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction, and the International Reading Association. Dr. Harris was instrumental in founding the IRA, who awarded him their William S. Gray Citation of Merit for his many contributions to their organization.

After publishing his first article in 1929, Dr. Harris established himself as a prolific writer over the next 60 years. His works appeared in such journals as *Psychological Review*, *American Journal of Psychology*, *Journal of Social Psychology*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Educational Research*, *Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Reading* and *Reading Research Quarterly*. He also published in a number of IRA Conference Proceedings, University of Chicago Educational Monographs, and National Reading Conference yearbooks. Dr. Harris' books include *How to Increase Reading Ability* (which has been in print for 50 years!), *The Effective Teaching of Reading*, *Readings on Reading Instruction*, *Casebook on Reading Disability*, *How to Teach Reading*, *Basic Elementary Vocabularies*, and *Basic Reading Vocabularies*. He was also coauthor of the Harris-Jacobson Readability Formulas.

Those who had the pleasure of knowing Bert personally were fortunate. He was the quintessential "gentleman." Despite his stature in the field, Bert never felt the need to dominate a conversation, let alone another person. He was always willing to consider points of view that opposed his;



Albert J. Harris (Courtesy International Reading Association)

and though his work was a model one could only strive to emulate, Bert always had time to listen and to share his vast knowledge. His respect for others can be illustrated by an incident that took place at a national conference. A teacher whom Bert had never met before came up and told him that she didn't like the basal program (the *MacMillan Reading Program*) of which he was chief author. Rather than berating, attempting to belittle, or ignoring the woman, Bert asked how the program could be improved. He listened to her for at least 30 minutes, interrupting only to ask for a clarification of, or elaboration on, a point. After the woman left, Bert turned to me and said, "We should never be too proud or busy to listen to those whom we teach or who try to use the ideas we expound. We can learn from them." Some of that teacher's ideas were incorporated into the revision of the basal program.

In 1990, the academic and educational communities lost an eminent scholar. Many of us lost a friend and a role model; and some of us, a mentor and confidant. His intellect will remain in his articles and books; and his personal character, in our hearts and minds.

State University of New York at Albany Edward Sipay

## DICK VENEZKY ENTERS HALL OF FAME

Richard L. Venezky has been elected to the International Reading Association's prestigious Hall of Fame. He was inducted at the IRA convention held in Las Vegas last May. Venezky was a key figure in the foundation of the History of Reading SIG, and has served as the SIG's 1st Vice-President. "I am looking forward to receiving my cane and rocking chair," said Venezky when reached for comment on this honor.