J. P. Guilford (1897–1987)

J. P. Guilford died of natural causes at the age of 90 in Los Angeles on November 26, 1987. He is survived by his wife, Ruth, his daughter, Joan S. McGuire, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He was born on a farm near Marquette, Nebraska on March 7, 1897, the son of Edwin and Arvilla Monroe Guilford. In 1914, he was graduated from Aurora High School as Valedictorian of his class. After teaching elementary school for two years, he attended the University of Nebraska for a year, entered the Army as a private, and after being discharged returned to complete his BA and MA at Nebraska. During this period he served as interim director of the Psychology Clinic where he administered intelligence tests to children. Although he became familiar with Spearman’s g-factor theory of intelligence, he was impressed with the unevenness of children’s abilities in different areas. This convinced him that intelligence was not one monolithic, global attribute, but a composite of different abilities. At this point in his training, therefore, he was already showing a strong interest in what was to be the dominant focus of his professional career, individual differences.
In 1924, Guilford entered the psychology PhD program at Cornell University where he studied with such famous historical figures as Titchener, Koffka, Helson, and Dallenbach. When Guilford was awarded the PhD at Cornell in 1927, he had already published five papers. His doctoral thesis showed that variations in reported sensory experience with weak stimuli were due more to the characteristics of the limen itself than to fluctuations in attention, contrary to what was commonly believed at that time.

After short periods of time on the faculties of the Universities of Illinois and Kansas, Guilford returned in 1928 to the University of Nebraska as Professor of Psychology where he achieved international renown as one of America's foremost psychologists. In 1940, he moved to the University of Southern California. Except for a period of leave to serve in the US Army Air Corps during World War II, he remained at USC until his formal retirement in 1962. This event represented little more than a milestone in his career since he continued to be very active in research and writing for 25 more years. As a teacher, Guilford trained dozens of graduate students who went on to make numerous contributions of their own to the psychometric literature.

During a productive research career that continued for more than six decades, Guilford published over 25 books, 30 tests, and 300 journal articles. Some of the honors and awards bestowed upon him include the following: elected President of the Psychometric Society (1938), the Midwestern Psychological Association (1939), the Western Psychological Association (1946), APA Division 5, Evaluation and Measurement (1947), the American Psychological Association (1949), and APA Division 10, Aesthetics (1956); awarded the Legion of Merit for outstanding military service (1946); awarded honorary degrees by the University of Nebraska (1952) and the University of Southern California (1962); elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences (1954); received the APA Distinguished Scientific Contributions Award (1964) and the Richardson Creativity Award (1966); elected President-for-Life of the International Society for Intelligence Education (1978); awarded the Gold Medal of the American Psychological Foundation (1983).

During the early years of his career, Guilford focused on such classical research topics in experimental psychology as attention, psychophysics, autokinetic phenomena, eye movements, scaling methods, and the phi phenomenon. The crowning achievement of this period, however, was the publication in 1936 of his classic textbook, *Psychometric Methods*, revised in 1954. This book became required reading for practically all psychology graduate students for decades and provided for the first time in one source an encyclopedic but readable exposition of psychophysical methods, scaling procedures, and even factor analysis. After the publication of this book, the focus of Guilford's research shifted more and more to the study of personality and ability traits.

L. L. Thurstone's *Vectors of Mind*, published in 1934, and related work on the primary mental abilities, provided a methodology which Guilford immediately began to apply to the study of personality. At the time, Jung's Extraversion-Introversion construct was generally believed to represent a single unitary dimension of personality. Guilford and his wife, Ruth, developed 35 questionnaire items to measure attributes commonly assumed to represent Extraversion-Introversion and subjected them to a factor analysis using Thurstone's new method. They demonstrated that Extraversion-Introversion was not one global trait but a complex composite of several distinct personality attributes.

This influential investigation was quickly followed by many other empirical studies of a similar kind which led to the identification of 13 important factors of personality. Three of these were measured in the first published factored personality inventory, The Nebraska Personality Inventory (1934). This line of research culminated in the publication of