Sir Cyril Lodowic Burt
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(1883–1971)

Sir Cyril Lodowic Burt, M.A., D.Sc., D.Litt., LL.D., was one of the world's great psychologists. In his 89th year, he died suddenly and unexpectedly of natural causes, in London, on October 10, 1971. He was Professor of Psychology, University College, London, from 1931 to 1950 and since then Professor Emeritus. For over 50 years he was the leading figure in Britain in the applications of psychology to education and the development of children and to the assessment of mental qualities.

Burt was born on March 3, 1883 in Westminster, London. His father was a medical doctor and physician to the Galton family. Auspiciously, Burt as a young man came under Sir Francis Galton's personal influence, which inspired Burt's lifelong interests in the study of heredity and mental measurement.

Though he came from a family of modest means, the young Burt found a series of excellent educational opportunities opened to him by the winning of scholarships. He was a classical scholar at Jesus College, Oxford, where he also majored in mathematics and studied other subjects relevant to his later career: psychology under William McDougall, biology and genetics under J. S. Haldane, and statistics with Karl Pearson. While at Oxford he was elected John Locke Scholar in Mental Philosophy. Then, after a period of psychological research and study with Külpe at the University of Würzburg, he returned to England to become Robert S. Woodworth's successor as an assistant to Sir Charles Sherrington, the famous neurophysiologist, at Liverpool University, where Burt also served as a lecturer in experimental psychology. After four years in that position, at the age of 29, he became a lecturer in experimental psychology at Cambridge. (One of his students there was the late Sir Frederick Bartlett, also one of England's most eminent psychologists, who, incidentally, authored Burt's biography for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.*)

Little more than a year later Burt was summoned to London as research psychologist to the London County Council, a position he held from 1913 to 1932. In this he was the first psychologist appointed to an education authority anywhere in the world. His duties were explicitly to serve the schools of London through psychological and educational research and services. His 19 years in this position (during the last 12 of which he was also Professor of Educational Psychology in the University of London)