



Michael Turvey: A Legacy of Scientific Excellence and Kindness

VITOR L. S. PROFETA¹

¹ Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Minas Gerais, MG, Brazil

Correspondence to: Vitor L. S. Profeta
email: vitorprofeta@ufmg.br
<https://doi.org/10.20338/bjmb.v17i5.396>

ABBREVIATIONS

CESPA Center for the Studies of Perception and Action

PUBLICATION DATA

Received 06 09 2023
Accepted 26 09 2023
Published 30 09 2023

ABSTRACT

Michael Turvey's research in motor control and coordination influenced many generations of movement scientists, Brazilian scholars included. Throughout his career, Michael Turvey aimed for excellence in research, teaching, and mentoring while treating students and colleagues with kindness.

KEYWORDS: Coordination | Ecological psychology | Movement sciences

INTRODUCTION

Michael Thomas Turvey peacefully left us on August 12th, 2023, at the age of 81. Born on February 14th, 1941, in East End London, England, Michael's life journey was marked by extraordinary accomplishments, indelible contributions, and a profound impact on psychology and movement sciences.

Educated at Loughborough University, Michael graduated in Physical Education in 1963. He earned his MA in Kinesiology in 1964 and later, in 1967, his Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from Ohio State University. In 1967, Michael joined the University of Connecticut as an Assistant Professor, a role he would embrace for the entirety of his career, becoming the Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Experimental Psychology. He also co-founded the Center for the Studies of Perception and Action (CESPA), a beacon of innovative research in perception and action.

Early in his academic journey, Michael delved into the intricacies of language and memory. However, later he pivoted toward an ecological psychology for all living things and dynamic systems theory applied to motor control and coordination. His research encompassed dynamic touch, visual perception, interlimb coordination, postural control, and speech perception.

Michael Turvey was one of the most accomplished scientists in the fields of Psychology and Movement Sciences. In 1974, he received the first American Psychological Association Early Career Award for his seminal work on human short-term and iconic memory. In 2009, he was honored with the Bernstein Prize from the International Society for Motor Control, recognizing his lifetime dedication to motor control research. He was also a proud receiver of the Ig Nobel Prize in Physics in 2004 along with Professor Ramesh Balasubramanian for their intriguing work on the physics of hula-hoop.

Michael's contributions extended beyond groundbreaking research. As an educator, Michael's impact was also immeasurable. A prolific speaker, professor, and mentor, he nurtured the minds of countless graduate students, leaving an indelible mark on their scholarly journeys. His commitment to mentorship earned him the inaugural Mentor Award from the Association for Psychological Science in 2013. He also received numerous university-level teaching accolades, a testament to his exceptional pedagogical skills.

Michael Turvey was a key speaker at the *Congresso Brasileiro de Comportamento Motor* in 2004. He visited Brazil many times and shared his ideas in many laboratories, always listening carefully and providing wise and respectful considerations. Michael Turvey mentioned more than once his respect for Brazilian scientists. He supervised some throughout his career.

Beyond the borders of academia, Michael's warmth and humility were evident. He was known for his patience, attentive listening, and a fondness for conversations shared over pints of beer at "Sweet Willams," the pub he and his wife and research partner, Claudia Carello, established in their home.

As we bid farewell to Michael Turvey, we recognize the rare synthesis of brilliance, empathy, and humility that defined his character. His contributions to science and humanity are immeasurable, and his examples will continue to illuminate the path for

generations to come. In his legacy, we find inspiration to pursue knowledge with unwavering dedication, mentor with genuine care, and approach life with the kindness he exemplified.

Citation: Profeta V. (2023). Michael Thomas Turvey: A Legacy of Scientific Excellence and Kindness. *Brazilian Journal of Motor Behavior*, 17(5):266-267.

Editor-in-chief: Dr Fabio Augusto Barbieri - São Paulo State University (UNESP), Bauru, SP, Brazil. **Associate editors:** Dr José Angelo Barela - São Paulo State University (UNESP), Rio Claro, SP, Brazil; Dr Natalia Madalena Rinaldi - Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES), Vitória, ES, Brazil; Dr Renato de Moraes - University of São Paulo (USP), Ribeirão Preto, SP, Brazil.

Copyright:© 2023 Profeta and BJMB. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Funding: This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20338/bjmb.v17i5.396>