

Remembering Robert W. Eisenberger: A Tribute to His Life and His Work on Perceived Organizational Support

Group & Organization Management
2022, Vol. 0(0) 1–17

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DOI: 10.1177/10596011221110650

journals.sagepub.com/home/gom



Introduction

Dr. Robert (Bob) Eisenberger passed away on May 2nd, 2022 at the age of 79 after a brief illness. Upon hearing the news, many of Bob's current and former students, professional colleagues, friends, and research collaborators began a series of email chains expressing our sadness and shock about losing Bob. There was an immediate and widespread outpouring of sadness and gratitude. It became apparent very quickly that Bob had touched the lives of many in an influential and positive way and that people wanted to honor him and memorialize his life's work by sharing stories about him.

Tom Zagenczyk, Outgoing Editor of *Group and Organization Management (GOM)* and friend and collaborator of Bob's, quickly realized on the day of Bob's passing that much of the journal's Editorial Board included Bob's former students and collaborators (this fact alone speaks to the substantial impact Bob has had on the field; he had even graciously accepted an invitation to serve on the *GOM* editorial board and completed reviews for the journal himself). He had the idea to do an editorial to honor and memorialize Bob in this August issue of *GOM*. It was met with numerous enthusiastic affirmative responses of people wanting to write stories about Bob.

Tom wanted an introductory statement written for the editorial. We are honored that he offered that spot to us (Linda Shanock, Mindy Shoss, Jackie Coyle-Shapiro and Lynn Shore). Our view of Bob is that his theoretical and practical brilliance, tenacity, and perseverance will live on in the many colleagues, graduate students (now professors and practitioners), and undergraduate students that he supervised and mentored over the years. His work legacy is alive and well in his many "offspring." In his work, Bob was true to himself, open to feedback, self-deprecatingly humorous, and thoughtful. He could not be rushed, and he held himself and others to high standards of

excellence. Sound arguments were needed to convince Bob that a paper was ready to send out for publication consideration or that a research idea would be fruitful. Bob's emails were affectionately signed "Cordially, Bob." We and his many professional friends and colleagues will miss his humor, his humility, his mind, his work ethic and his support for all the people and things (like perceived organizational support; POS) that he cared so dearly about. He embodied what he researched and leaves a legacy of supporting students, colleagues, friends as well as laughter from his quirky sense of humor.

We include a brief bio about Bob below, and we hope that you enjoy the many stories that follow, contained within the pages of this Editorial, about the positive influence Bob had on the lives and work of many people across the globe. Bob sets the bar for impact—he shaped the topics to which the field gives attention (perceived organizational support), how the field thinks about these topics (organizational support theory), management practice through his work training supervisors to demonstrate support, and the lives of a large number of students and colleagues.

Brief Work Bio about Dr. Eisenberger

Bob began publishing well before completion of his PhD in Psychology from the University of California, Riverside in 1972. His first faculty position was at the State University of New York at Albany (1971–1978) and then at the University of Delaware (1978–2009). Finally, he was Professor of Psychology and Management and Leadership at the University of Houston (2010–2022). Bob was a fellow of five divisions of the American Psychological Association—1, 6, 10, 14, and 25. He was also elected to the Society of Organizational Behavior in 2014.

Across his career, Bob has published in three major areas, including perceived organizational support, interest and creativity, and learned industriousness. Bob is best known for his foundational work on perceived organizational support (POS)—the extent to which employees believe their work organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. He and a team of graduate students conducted the original research on this topic in the mid-1980's including creation of the well-known and widely used POS measure and supporting theory.

Bob developed the idea of POS and presented this concept in a compelling manner in his early work. In fact, there were many researchers in the commitment area at that time who were of the view that commitment was primarily an individual difference variable. Bob's work persuaded most researchers that commitment is a "two-way street," contributing to a paradigm shift in this literature. He followed up his original article (published in *Journal*

of *Applied Psychology* in 1986; current citation count on Google Scholar is 12,842) with many more studies focused on POS and expanded to incorporate other support concepts including perceived supervisor support.

Many others saw the value of POS as well. Research on POS blossomed exponentially over the next few decades. As a testament to the utility and popularity of POS, there have been literally thousands of publications on POS including several meta-analyses, and Bob's work has been cited over 50,000 times—placing him in the top 1% of all scholars in Business and Management. Bob's writing was clear and compelling. He has produced an outstanding body of work, showing the value of perceived organizational support as a predictor of employee commitment, performance, organizational citizenship, and turnover.

Bob's work in the area of POS continues even after his passing; papers with students and colleagues are under review. He worked on and published numerous, high-impact journal articles and a highly regarded book on POS. He sought not only to understand the benefits of POS but also to teach organizations and managers to better support workers.

Some Stories About Bob Eisenberger

Contributed by Linda Rhoades Shanock, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

It is hard to describe all the ways that Bob Eisenberger has positively influenced my life. As my advisor during graduate school he saw he saw talents in me that I did not know I had and he cultivated them. He taught me the courage to speak up, disagree, and engage in debate about research topics. He gave me extensive feedback on papers that made me a better writer. He taught me what it takes to publish in high-quality journals. Bob had high expectations and was sparingly effusive, but that just made it all the sweeter when I knew he was proud of me. You knew you had pleased Bob if he said your idea was “nifty” (thank you, Dr. Missy Houlette, for reminding me of that). The research skills Bob taught me have served me well during my 20 years as a professor and I enjoyed continuing to collaborate with Bob on research projects up through our last publication together in 2020.

Bob was also a great connector of people and collaborated on research with numerous scholars. When I was a doctoral student Bob connected me to some of the great scholars in my area of interest including Drs. Lynn Shore, Lois Tetrick, Lou Buffardi, Denise Rousseau, and Jackie Coyle-Shapiro. I appreciated that so much! It allowed me to interact with them and gain their respect in a way that would not have occurred without Bob's connection. As another way to help facilitate connection among scholars interested in POS, in

2002 Bob and I started organizing an annual POS dinner at one of our national conferences each year. There were good laughs, good stories, and great food at each one. We organized these dinners together for 15 years in a row. My favorite one was the time Bob convinced his wife Joanne to host the POS dinner at their home in Houston. She is a great cook, and it was amazingly gracious of her and a real treat to be welcomed into their home. Although we have not had any POS conference dinners during the pandemic years, I think we should plan one in Bob's honor at an upcoming conference in 2023.

Contributed by Mindy Shoss, University of Central Florida

Among the many things that Bob taught me, one that stands out the most is his emphasis on rigorously interrogating ideas before data collection. As his research lab was gearing up for a data collection tied to an Army Research Institute grant led by Bob, Bob asked me to come up with some ideas that would fit with the study and advance POS research. One of my ideas (the one remaining after the rest were rejected by the group) was that abusive supervision would diminish POS because people would view the supervisor as representing the organization and the organization in failing in its responsibilities to protect them. Being new to his lab, I figured that I would suggest the idea, we would throw an abusive supervision measure in the data collection, and then we would see what they data had to say about it. However, after what was supposed to be a one-hour lab meeting stretched on to its third hour in a tiny windowless room in the University of Houston psychology building, I realized this was not going to be the case. Bob, after drawing the model on the board, walked us through interrogating the idea and the measures against the tenants of organizational support theory. The paper was later published in *Journal of Applied Psychology* with some additional data and theory help from Simon Restubog and Tom Zagenczyk. The reviewers' critiques were nothing compared to the thoughtful and precise questions Bob asked of the idea at its inception, and his brilliant responses whenever the group got stumped. I am grateful to Bob for showing me how to develop theory-driven arguments and for connecting me to Simon and Tom, who would become long-time collaborators and friends. I am grateful to Bob (and Linda!) for ensuring that the community of POS scholars is supportive of each other and acknowledges each other's contributions.

Contributed by Jacqueline Coyle-Shapiro, London School of Economics

I met Bob in 2001 in Houston for a workshop that would culminate in an edited book. I can still remember to this day the moment I was introduced to him which brings a smile to my face. There was always a lot of banter with Bob at the annual POS dinners driven by his quirky sense of humor. The newcomers to the dinners probably sat back and thought “what have I gotten myself into”!

Bob and I were united by our love of Indian food and being directionally challenged. At SIOP in New York, we met in the hotel lobby (Bob with map in hand!) and proceeded to walk to the Indian restaurant. With a burst of overconfidence, I said to Bob, “don’t worry, I will get us back to the hotel, how hard could it be!” Engaged in POS conversation as we made our way back to the hotel, 20 minutes later, Bob asked, “doesn’t that restaurant look familiar?” “It couldn’t be,” was my thought. We had arrived back at the same restaurant we left and never again did we lose sight of Bob’s highlighted route on the map!

It was an honor and a pleasure to know Bob and I am sure there will be plenty of tears (as well as laughter) at the next POS dinner! The legacy he has left with his work and the cultivation of a vibrant POS community. Thank you, thank you Bob!

Contributed by Lynn M. Shore, Colorado State University and Ghent University

My original contact with Bob was through a phone conversation in which I was trying to organize a session on perceived organizational support. This was the first of many sessions that we participated in together at either the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, or the Academy of Management. In addition to conference sessions, Bob participated in a mini-conference on the employment relationship organized by me, Susan Taylor, Lois Tetrick, and Jackie Coyle-Shapiro, which culminated in an edited book (2004). Bob’s participation in the conference and his chapter were both quite valuable. He joined in the fun during dinners and discussions, always ready to add to the success of any activity he engaged in. We recently published an article in *Journal of International Business Studies* (2020) titled “Perceived Organizational Support (POS) across 54 nations: A cross-cultural meta-analysis of POS effects [Rockstuhl et al. \(2020\)](#).” Bob was true to his vision in every aspect of this work, sharing his well-crafted scientific contributions with care and precision. He was a very open and generous

colleague, and it was a great pleasure to collaborate with him. Whenever I asked Bob for help, such as recommending references, sharing materials, or reading manuscripts, he was very responsive. Bob took his commitments seriously, and if he said that he would undergo a task by a certain date, he did so.

Bob has been dedicated to the development of his students. I have met many of Bob's current and former students and watched them present papers at professional meetings. His students are well prepared, articulate, and thoughtful. I have also coauthored papers and served on committees with his PhD students, and his commitment to the professional development and success of students has been clear and consistent in all his endeavors.

I have known Bob for 30 years and have had the pleasure of interacting with him at professional meetings as well as collaborating with him on several research projects. He has been a good friend, and someone I always look forward to meeting with at conferences. I have enjoyed many POS dinners at conferences organized by Linda Shanock, who was a former PhD student of Bob's at University of Delaware. The dinners were both a way for coauthors, colleagues, and current and former students to honor Bob for his many accomplishments, and to gently tease Bob for his eccentricities, which Bob took in good humor. As I think back, I particularly enjoyed Bob's telling of his rice cracker debacle, and how he thought he was eating a healthy snack but that it resulted in many cavities. He had us all laughing and joking, enjoying our time together.

Bob always signed his emails "Cordially, Bob." He never departed from this finish, and I think it reflected Bob's innate, and understated kindness. His humor came through in his communications too. Here is an email after our JIBS article acceptance "The article looks great. Thomas [Rockstuhl] showed excellent leadership and we all showed pretty good followership." Bob and I met for coffee at the last in-person Academy of Management meeting in 2019 before the pandemic, where we discussed the direction that Bob planned to take in his research. Bob remarked that he wondered if it was time to start a new research stream since he was not sure that there was much more to say about POS. Perhaps he recognized at some level that his contribution was complete, and he was preparing for the next chapter. Bon voyage Bob, we will miss you!

Contributed by Denise M. Rousseau, Carnegie Mellon University

I followed Bob's work on Perceived Organizational Support for a decade before I met him. What a treat when I finally did. Invited by him to give a talk at UDelaware, I got a tour of Bob's office and lab. Is Bob the only OB scholar

who had a FRAMED PHOTO OF A WHITE RAT in his office? According to Bob as the rare OB person who had studied animals, children, and workers, he was entitled to honor the scope of his research into the animal kingdom.

Bob was both very chill and a passionate person: Bob's students clearly adored him and participating in their conversations with him was thought provoking and good fun. Although teaching and research were his joys, he was full of praise and awe for Joann, his wife of many years. After hearing him talk about her, people who met her would say "wow, YOU'RE JOANN!" He adored his partner in life and made her famous on OB circles. Will miss this lovely man.

Contributed by Louis T. Buffardi, George Mason University

In 1999, I was serving on a George Mason University task force that was concerned with faculty/staff quality of work life (QWL) and I was responsible for drafting our organization's initial work attitude survey. Having recently read one of Bob's papers and being thoroughly impressed with POS and the research behind it, it was very clear that POS was the perfect measure to serve as the foundation for our survey. A few years later when Bob was looking for additional papers for his POS symposium for an upcoming conference, I sent him a manuscript based on the findings of our QWL survey. I was honored that he saw fit to include our paper. Even though we had never met previously, I found him to be a warm and welcoming colleague and we continued to stay connected with each other over the years.

Indeed, in the ensuing decade, I had the good fortune of participating in 7 of Bob's conference POS symposia, which inevitably involved many informal POS dinners, including one that he hosted at his Houston home. The friendship and camaraderie shared at those dinners was very special and a testament to Bob's ability to bring people together both professionally and personally. It was a great treat to be in his company each and every time.

Over the years, it was clear that POS research was accelerating and, seemingly, being related to *every* other construct of interest to organizational psychologists, so I was immensely pleased when he gave his blessing for our Mason research group to update the Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) meta-analysis. What was planned as a 20-year review turned into 25 with, it seemed, nearly continuous updating required by the burgeoning influence of POS in the research literature.

Speaking for myself and those of us in our research group, getting to see that manuscript published in 2015 was our proudest professional moment. Throughout the entire process and the many weekly conference calls, Bob's professionalism, humor, persistence, and talent for gentle persuasion shone

through. From all those conversations, Bob provided the rest of us with a master class on how to become better collaborators.

Without doubt his passing is a great loss to the profession. But more than that, Bob was a gem of a human being and, as one of many who benefitted from his company, I will miss him deeply.

Contributed by Florence Stinglhamber, Université catholique de Louvain

The cobbler is the worst shod? Not Bob, that is for sure! One day, as I was telling him how grateful and lucky I felt to be working with him on papers that will undoubtedly have a crucial impact on my career, he stopped me dead in my tracks by bursting out laughing and saying “You’re wrong, it’s the other way around, it’s your visit to my lab that gives my career a boost.” This one sentence is for me emblematic of who Bob was: a humble person, with a strong sense of humor, who strongly valued the contributions of others.

Bob, it was an honor for me to share a few mini-fragments of your admirable career. Thank you for having given this chance to the “little Belgian” that I was and still am, thank you for having taught me so much, for having shared your passion for POS with me, for having been a great mentor, an example and even an idol for the young researcher that I was. I owe you so much! I will miss you... you and your emails from time to time with news from POS but also from you and Joanne, whom my thoughts are with! Don’t worry: the legacy of your work is alive for a long time, with all your “descendants” around the world. We will have the pleasure and honor, Gaëtane and I, to dedicate to your memory the book on POS that we are writing in French. With all my heart, thank you for everything!

Contributed by Gaëtane Caesens, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium

When I first met Bob, I was a (Belgian) first year master student travelling for the first time in US to work as a research intern in the « POS » lab. I was really excited, honored and also anxious to meet « the » famous Professor Eisenberger... Immediately, Bob was really gentle to me, introducing me to his research team, helping me through paperwork, and reassured me regarding my English skills. Few weeks after my arrival, I had doubts regarding my contributions in his bi-weekly research meetings... I remember vividly receiving this email at the end of the work day : « Hi Gaetane, Excellent work on research ideas today. Bob ». You cannot imagine how powerful where those (timely)

words.... It is just one of numerous examples that illustrates how Bob was sincerely valuing others' contributions. Bob was always willing to offer help in my career, particularly during difficult times. In essence, Bob really embodied is theory of organizational support. He was a passionate and talented researcher with a lot of humor, a wonderful mentor and a great teacher. I admire his dedication to research and work, but above all his profound humility. I am very grateful for all the things he learnt to me. Thank you for everything Bob, you will be greatly missed...

Contributed by Gökhan Karagonlar, Dokuz Eylül University

Bob is one of the most hard-working people I have seen. I feel lucky to have worked with him as his graduate student at UD. I learned a lot from him on good manuscript writing and how to turn simple research ideas to high-impact papers. He will be greatly missed among POS researchers.

Contributed by Pedro Neves, Nova School of Business and Economics

I still remember my first visit to Bob's lab at the University of Delaware. It was in my fourth year of the PhD program. I was very excited to have the opportunity to discuss with such a prominent academic. As someone taking his first steps as a researcher, I recall the surprise with which I received his email incentivizing my visit. At the time, I wondered why Bob would take in a student from a country and university with which he had no previous ties and with no track record that even remotely signaled potential competence as a researcher. But that was Bob. A few years later, when I went to his lab for my post-doc, I found that this was not a single nor rare event; Bob welcomed students from all around the world and he really enjoyed our discussions and the diversity we brought to his lab. Our ignorance was always met with a "that's fine" remark, followed by advice on how to approach the challenge.

I won't dare say he enjoyed these conversations as much as his tennis. His love of tennis was legendary—he made sure we all knew. I saw him play during one of my dog walks and I just stood there in astonishment. I had no idea he was such a fast and cunning tennis player (if you worked with him, you would probably be surprised as well). His speed on the court seemed the antithesis of how he approached his research: never rush and always double check.

Since that first visit, he became a central piece in my development as an academic. We collaborated for many years. Still today, I ask myself "what would Bob say?" And still today I laugh out loud when I hear myself say to my graduate students "I don't understand," the sentence with which he greeted

many of my (not so great) ideas for research. He left an undeniable mark, and I will always smile when I think about my time in his lab and how much I learned from him.

Contributed by Michael T. Ford, University of Alabama

Of my experiences with Bob, what stands out the most was our work (with James Kurtessis, Louis Buffardi, Kathleen Stewart, and Cory Adis) on the perceived organizational support meta-analysis published in *Journal of Management* (Kurtessis et al., 2017). That project started in 2007 and did not get accepted until 2015. During that period there were more phone calls and emails with the group than I could count. Bob's patience, persistence, and humor were essential for the success of that project, which will always be a highlight of my career. I believe one of Bob's greatest strengths, of which there were many, was his ability to identify and write about concepts in a way that was simple and understandable. I suspect this is a major reason his work has been so influential. In developing the construct of perceived organizational support, Bob took the concept of employee commitment to the organization and turned it on its head in a manner that will influence the field for many years to come.

Contributed by Tom Zagenczyk, North Carolina State University

I had never met Bob (although I held him in very high regard) when he emailed me out of the blue in 2011ish to congratulate me for, in his words, "finally publishing my dissertation," to tell me that it made an important contribution to the POS literature, and invite me to work with him on a paper. This was a huge psychological boost for me at that stage of my career and I still consider it to be the best professional compliment I have ever received—I even included the email in my tenure packet. After that he always met with me at AOM, either individually or at the POS dinner, and we worked on several projects, several of which are still going. He was always so kind, humble, gracious, and absent-minded in a charming way. I will miss him.

Contributed by Dianhan Zheng, Kennesaw State University

As one of his first group of students after he moved to Houston, I had the honor to work with Bob closely for many years. To me, Bob was a role model in living a simple yet very fulfilling life. I still remember what made up Bob's typical workday lunch: a bag of English muffins, a can of fruit, and a bottle of water. He also told us a funny story about him eating rice crackers for lunch so

often that he ended up having teeth problems. Stories like this made me respect Bob so much as someone who had found his true calling in life and regarded material things as secondary. Bob also loved and admired his wife, Joanne. A typical response he would give me, after I asked him about important decisions I needed to make in life, was “I will ask Joanne about it and let you know what he thinks.” I will miss his wisdom, humor, patience, and smile.

As we were creating a memorial board for Joanne, I was also reminded of a story that I previously heard from our fellow graduate students. Although I was not there, I think this tells a lot about who Bob was as a professor: Bob was having back problems one day during his graduate seminar which made him unable to sit or stand for an extended period of time. He decided to lay down on a desk in front of the classroom and taught that 3-hr seminar on his back.

Contributed by Min-Kyu Joo, University of Sydney

My memory with Bob started with a call. When I was a second-year doctoral student at the University of Houston, I heard that several colleagues in my department worked on projects with Bob. I had never met him before, and he is a well-known scholar. Thus, I hesitated to contact him to ask whether I could join his lab. I called him and very fortunately, he welcomed me to join his lab. The first call was over 30 minutes. He asked me many questions about my research interests and other things over the phone. After I joined his lab, we had a number of discussions in terms of potential research. He always sought to publish in top tier journals. Thus, whenever I came up with ideas, he said all the time—“it sounds good but...How about this idea?” He continued to encourage me to think more comprehensively about perceived organizational support and relevant concepts. I was frustrated with these experiences during the first 6 months, because it seemed that I did nothing—that is, no progress at all for our research. In my mind, I wanted him to suggest any idea for me rather than just keep asking me to come up with ideas. However, I could learn how to conduct research from the beginning to the end, including sophisticated methodological skills through this challenging experience. I can truly say that Bob is an excellent research collaborator and mentor. I have now worked on several projects with him. He collaborated with many other scholars in his career too. He is also truly a nice human being. All discussions in his lab were based on his textbook. He shared some costs for the textbook—perceived organizational support with each student, reflecting that the extent to which he cared for his students. Bob had a profound effect on his graduate students. He always inspired his students as a scholar and teacher. Bob was eager to work

collaboratively with students. Several of his students have gone on to become a new generation of scholars now. Bob is also a very friendly individual with a very good sense of humor. We will miss him a lot. I particularly missed his “cordially” in his email. Thank you, Bob, for inspiring and motivating me to work in a more joyful way.

Contributed by Zihan Liu, University of Houston

The first time I met with Bob in person was at noon on August 16th, 2018, when Bob invited another new graduate student and me for lunch on campus. I can still remember we walked together from the psychology building to a cafe, talking about our interests and my career inspiration. Bob asked about the classes I was going to take in the first semester and offered me advice on how to balance the time for coursework and research, what to focus on in each class, and how to best leverage the courses to prepare for my academic career. His humility, humor, and sincere concern for students immediately alleviated my anxiety about starting graduate study.

As an advisor, Bob paid attention to every student's needs and provided tailored research training correspondingly. Bob emphasized to me the importance of clarity in conveying research findings and their implications. For example, he would read my manuscript sentence by sentence and request many rounds of edits and revisions to help improve my writing. He also asked me to explain the major idea of the research projects I led before we went into detailed discussions, even in regular research meetings with lab mates already familiar with the research. He also asked questions as if he were an external audience to help me structure and clarify my introduction. I was anxious about introducing my research at the beginning and did not fully understand the need to repeat the process. However, I gradually realized how helpful the training was when I started to present at conferences or in workshops to a mixed audience, including both researchers and practitioners, and became confident in handling questions during my presentation. Bob was also constantly pursuing rigor and clarity in his work. He always asked me to stop him immediately whenever I had any questions or disagreements because he cared about the quality of the research and enjoyed the questions as intellectual stimulation.

Bob not only supported my academic career but also always made himself available whenever I encountered challenges in life or needed to make important decisions. He asked me not to hesitate to phone him if I needed any help. He always said, “That’s what I am here for,” every time I felt sorry for bothering him. Even if Bob did not have immediate answers to or solutions for my issue, he would help me reach out to other people; for instance, he

sometimes even held mini “family meetings” and discussed the situation with his wife, Joanne.

I realized Bob played multiple important roles in my life after his passing, such as a supportive advisor, a thorough research collaborator, and a mentor in life. I feel honored and grateful to work closely with him over the past several years. Bob’s rigorous attitude toward research, his striving for excellence, and his kindness and humility will have a lasting impact on my future career and life, just as I began to enjoy English muffins (i.e., the food Bob usually had for lunch).

Contributed by Salar Mesdaghinia, Eastern Michigan University

I was very fortunate to have Bob Eisenberger as my doctoral advisor and research collaborator. Joining his lab was a great opportunity for me for many reasons. First, he did not put a line between a student and a research collaborator. He truly trusted his students as research collaborators and involved them in all aspects of research. This allowed students to learn how to do research experientially in collaboration with a seasoned researcher. For me, in particular, this was transformative as it gradually changed my perfectionistic and complicating approach to research to a more pragmatic and effective approach. His tips for how to evaluate research ideas, collect data, write manuscripts, respond to reviewers, etc. were also very useful for learning the nuances of the research process. Second, Bob humbly valued critical feedback from students and research collaborators. He understood how criticism helped improve good ideas or give up on low-potential ones. During my first participation in his lab meetings, I questioned one aspect of his organizational support theory—that employees personify organizations. His response did not convince me and I presented a, in my opinion convincing, counter-argument. During the break he called me to another room to talk to me. He thanked me with a big smile that exuded satisfaction and excitement, saying (to the best of my recollection) that this is exactly what I am supposed to do in our collaboration. His appreciation of feedback and patience with differing opinions continued throughout the years of our collaboration. Perhaps the only exception was when he was understandably concerned with time-efficiency or had to meet a deadline for launching a survey or writing up a paper.

Third, Bob’s approach was to quickly get to the heart of research ideas in order to evaluate their contribution-potential, practicality, and appeal. This saved a lot of time as unlike some other doctoral advisors, Bob did not ask students to write up half of a paper to explain their research ideas. Instead, in Bob’s lab, we had brief informal presentations of research ideas using box and arrow models before deciding to move forward with a research idea. Writing was saved for the very end

after the analysis was completed. This approach made the research process more efficient and productive. Fourth, embodying supervisor support, Bob respected his students, cared about their success in job search and beyond, and valued their contributions to research projects. To the best of my knowledge he did not push students to work long hours or over the weekend although he used to do both himself. He made sure that students had enough opportunity to collaborate on research projects and did not hesitate to give them credit for their work. After I graduated, he told me that he no longer viewed me as a student, but as a research collaborator and friend. I immediately thought that this was true to a large extent even when I was his student. As one of his last supportive actions, just 2 weeks prior to his passing, he sought my cooperation in a matter that helped his students in the job market.

Contributed by Xueqi Wen, Tongji University

It was March 2016 when Bob called me and let me know that I was accepted into the I/O program at the University of Houston. I was very excited because I had read many seminal publications by Bob and could not believe that I would have the chance to work with him. As such, I accepted the offer on the phone without any hesitation and there was never a moment when I regretted making such a quick decision during my past 6 years' research experience with Bob.

Bob was a dedicated and detail-oriented researcher. He would go through with us every single detail of a research project, from scale selection and drafting messages to participants to data cleaning and paper writing to ensure the high quality of research. Despite all the accomplishments Bob had achieved in his career, he was very humble and patient with his students. Bob liked to discuss research ideas with us, asked for our suggestions, and encouraged us to interrupt him whenever we had a disagreement. I recall one time I made a mistake in data analyses which could largely change our findings. Bob did not blame me for that and told me that "Everyone in this lab could have three chances to make mistakes, and no matter how serious the mistake is, it is more important to learn from it." Although I believe I had made more than three mistakes during these years with Bob, he was always understanding and helped me figure out solutions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I thought it might be more difficult to meet with Bob due to the lockdown. However, Bob tried very hard to get himself familiar with everything online to make sure that we could find him when needed. Thanks to technology, we worked more closely with Bob since then. Sometimes Bob even met with us during the weekends when there were issues of ongoing projects coming up. He joked that we could call him any time before 10 p.m. When I was on the job market looking for an academic

position last year, Bob spent hours with me, helping me improve my application materials and prepare for the interviews. Bob checked with me almost every week about the progress of my job search and seemed to be even more excited than I was when knowing that I got an offer.

After graduation, I still met with Bob regularly to discuss research and get his guidance on different issues. It has just become part of my life to chat with Bob and share with him what was going on with my research, career, and life. I realized how much I relied on Bob for support and guidance after his passing. I feel really lucky and grateful to have Bob as my advisor, and I will always miss his smile.

Contributed by Jing Zhang, California State University, San Bernadino

When I entered the Ph.D. program at the University of Houston, my career goal was to develop a term, potentially a theory, to be added to industrial and organizational psychology research. How hard can that be? We had a professor in the same building who had done that, right? It was not until a few years into the program, and I saw how hard Bob had been working, that I realized the goal was so impossible to reach, and one had to devote all he had to it. As hard as it might be, Bob's hard-working, perseverance, and dedication to the academic field have inspired me to continue my work. Thank you, Bob, for being such a great role model for many of us.

Conclusion

In closing, it is clear from reading the many stories about Bob and his work, his life outside of work including his relationship with his wife of 53 years (Joanne), that Bob had an influence on many people in the fields of IO Psychology and Management. Bob was able to address very practical organizational issues through the integration of diverse literatures to produce conceptually meaningful work and through his work training supervisors to demonstrate support. Many scholars are fortunate if they achieve even a fraction of what Bob achieved in the POS research area. His early work on learned helplessness and learned industriousness, intrinsic motivation and creativity was also impactful. Bob was a truly gifted researcher, a great colleague, mentor, and friend. He will be missed by many. His legacy will live on in the work that continues in the research areas he valued.

Cordially,

Bob Eisenberger's former students, colleagues and friends

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