**IN MEMORIAM**

Thomas John Kehle

Professor in the Graduate School of Education

University of Connecticut

1943 – 2018

Dr. Thomas John Kehle, 74, of Willington, CT, died on Wednesday, February 7th, 2018, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. He leaves behind his wife of 56-years, Gretchen Kehle; grandchildren, Megan and Matthew Dwyer; brothers, Gregory Kehle and Anthony Kehle; and sister Pamela Kehle Schwantes; as well as many nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his beloved daughter, Deborah G. Kehle; mother, Genevieve; father, Anthony; and brother, James.

Professor of the School Psychology Program at The University of Connecticut since 1987, Tom served as Director of the School Psychology Program in the Department of Educational Psychology for more than 25-years. During that time, Tom led the program through multiple APA and NASP accreditation reviews, mentored numerous doctoral and master’s students, and was instrumental in developing one of the top five graduate programs in school psychology, nationally. During a long academic career, Tom made a significant impact on the field of school psychology. His dedicated scholarship, teaching, and service as well as high standards of integrity have resulted in lifetime of contributions of unusual breadth and depth for children and psychologists alike. More importantly, his career, character, and influence genuinely illustrate the principles of a scientist, scholar, and leader.

## Tom was born in Toledo, Ohio on July 15, 1943, and had many fond memories of his boyhood experiences there, as portrayed in his published short story “The Park.” He moved to Pompano Beach, Florida as a teenager, attending Pompano Beach High School, where he met his wife, Gretchen Koll. Tom graduated from Pompano Beach High School and subsequently joined the United States Army, later joining the police force as an officer. He earned his Bachelor's degree from the Florida Atlantic University and his Master's and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Kentucky. Upon graduation from the University of Kentucky, Tom worked for the Louisville Public Schools as a school psychologist. However, academia was his ultimate calling and he joined the university faculty as an Assistant Professor of School Psychology at Kent State University. He worked at Kent State from 1973 – 1979, earning tenure as an Associate Professor in 1976. While at Kent State, he engaged in close working relationships with his esteemed mentor, Dr. Jim Barclay, and his respected colleague, Dr. John Guidubaldi. In 1979, Tom and his family moved to Park City, Utah where he served as Professor and Director of the School Psychology program at the University of Utah until 1987. There he collaborated closely with his dear friends and colleagues, Drs. Elaine Clark and Bill Jenson. In 1987, Tom accepted the position of Director of the School Psychology Program at the University of Connecticut, where he worked for the remainder of his career. At UConn, Tom enjoyed a long and productive writing partnership with his protégé and colleague, Dr. Melissa Bray, as well as a close relationship with the Bray family.

A noted and prolific scholar, Tom was devoted in his service to the professions of psychology and education. His academic work may be characterized by thoroughness, punctuality, and intellectual risk-taking. He valued diversity in theory and practice, and was willing to devote considerable effort to objective inquiry. He engaged in many spirited conversations and debates with scholars in the field, with many noting that Tom was a force to be reckoned with. Tom’s intellectual competence and allegiance to the scientific method resulted in a distinguished record of scholarship across more than four decades. He was very committed to working with children to enhance their intellectual, academic and social/emotional functioning. However, Tom was most proud of his work that focused on improving the psychological well-being of children, particularly his contribution of the conception of the RICH theory. Tom believed that the goals of education should focus on helping children attain four ingredients of a happy life, comprising the acronym "R.I.C.H": a sense of individual freedom (resources), intimacy, competence, and health. Tom’s distinguished record of scholarship is evidenced by an exceptional record of publications. He had published more than 200 peer-reviewed articles, chapters, and reviews in prestigious journals, and presented approximately 155 scholarly papers at regional, national and international conferences. Tom earned the national ranking as the second most prolific author in school psychology. Notably, following his national ranking, he was asked to edit Oxford’s School Psychology Handbook, a hallmark book within the realm of school psychology. The Handbook serves as a compendium of issues, scientific findings and developments, written by undisputed leaders in their respective areas of expertise. Significantly, the Handbook promulgates the application of evidence-based practice, which leads to consistent and efficacious service provision to children and adolescents by ensuring well-informed decision-making.

Tom also demonstrated strong leadership skills, serving as President of the Division of School and Child Psychology, Secretary for the Society for the Study of School Psychology (and founding member) (SSSP), and Secretary-Treasurer for the Council for the Directors of School Psychology Programs (CDSPP). He also actively served the profession through multiple appointments to editorial boards which drew on Tom’s astute judgment.

Tom’s profound drive to succeed and excel, the intensity of his engagement and commitment, combined with his diligence and efficient organizational skills, culminated in national recognition of his leadership and research by professional organizations, including being named Fellow in the American Psychological Association, American Psychological Society, and the American Association of Applied and Preventive Psychology. In addition, Tom was the recipient of the Neag School of Education Outstanding Research Award, which recognized his contributions to school psychology. Tom was especially proud of The Legends in School Psychology Award and the Outstanding Contribution to Training Award, both bestowed upon him by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The accolades that Tom received attest to the high regard in which he was held within the scientific community.

Tom’s students and protégés were a source of incredible pride and satisfaction to him, to whom he selflessly passed on his commitment to school psychology. Moreover, his passion and dedication to scientific inquiry conveyed to his students and resulted in a school psychology program that graduated highly qualified, rigorously trained, ethical psychologists that valued integrity. Tom’s students learned first-hand to be first-rate scientist-practitioners through his generosity and in sharing his story and life lessons that were absorbed by watching him, listening to his tales, and rubbing elbows with him. Tom taught students how to go on with grace in the face of loss and how to buckle down and get done that which needs to be done. He wrote every Sunday with his close friend and colleague, Melissa Bray. It was considered an honor to be invited to the Kehle home for a writing session with he and Melissa and to partake in a fabulous Sunday morning breakfast prepared by Tom’s wife Gretchen.

Tom was a dynamic school psychologist, researcher, professor, editor, leader, and colleague. He was truly a gentle soul, who was loyal and generous beyond measure. Those who knew Tom will treasure all of the funny asides, chuckles, and surprising flashes of wit and wisdom he shared over the years. His giving nature touched all who knew and loved him, and his protégés were a source of incredible pride and satisfaction to him throughout his life. We are certain that Tom extracted a healthy measure of existential integrity from the relationships that he sculpted with his students, colleagues, and friends.

It is just as certain that, in the aftermath of his passing and the loss that many of us feel, there will be a clear legacy of caring and being that he has left us; an embodiment that we will incorporate into our lives in his honor.  May our beloved friend, mentor, and colleague rest in eternal peace.

A memorial service for Tom will be held at The University of Connecticut on Saturday, March 17th, from 12:30PM-4PM, in the Charles B. Gentry Building, 249 Glenbrook Road, Storrs, CT. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Tom’s name for School Psychology graduate students at the University of Connecticut. Please see the Thomas J. Kehle, Ph.D. Scholarship page (<http://s.uconn.edu/kehle>).