

FEATURES

The Humble Professor

A spotlight on Psychology Prof. Albert Bandura

By TOMMY TOBIN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

If you walk into the unassuming office of Prof. Albert Bandura, you'll be flooded with rows upon rows of books, and high stacks of papers. You'll be greeted with large amounts of whiteout, and a load of writing utensils. You might even be struck by what you don't find — a computer.

Amazingly, visitors to Bandura's office tend not to notice a large plaque denoting his Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Psychological Association or the plaque from the MacArthur Foundation. His office demonstrates one fact that rings true about Bandura — despite the fact that his peers consider him the world's greatest living psychologist: He is one of the gentlest, most humble and most sincere individuals you will ever encounter.

Unless you've been introduced to the discipline of psychology, you may have missed the professor and his work. Here's a brief sketch: Bandura was born in the small Canadian hamlet of Mundare, Alberta, in the early 1920s. He went on to develop the theory of observational learning with his Bobo Doll experiment in the 1950s. Since 1953, he has been an active faculty member in the psychology department here at Stanford, where he is the David Starr Jordan Professor of Social Sciences.

The Daily's Tommy Tobin '10, a research assistant for Bandura, spoke with him about his life and his work in psychology.

Stanford Daily: Prof. Bandura, let's discuss your humble beginnings. Growing up in Mundare, what was life like in rural Alberta?

Albert Bandura: It was a small hamlet, population 400; it was essentially a community of immigrants from Poland and Ukraine. Life was very difficult. My father worked on laying track for the Trans-Canada Railroad, and my mother worked in a local store. When they garnered enough money, they [got] a homestead cheap. But the land was dense with boulders and was heavily forested. There was little mechanization then and it was a tough battle against the elements.

We often have academic debates about constructionism. Life in Alberta, in that time, was not an academic subject for debate with arcane language — it was a lived reality. They had to construct their whole environment and

their own lifestyle.

But they also knew how to party; they had a lot of saints, which provided many opportunities for celebrations. They also brewed their own spirits — I was struck by their remarkable creativity. There was one farmer there who sectioned off part of his steam engine for grinding his wheat, and in the other part distilled his alcoholic spirits. This is an early example of multi-tasking!

The transition from this small hamlet in Northern Alberta to the balmy palms of Stanford was a remarkable transformation, to say the least.

SD: Throughout your work, there is a ringing tone of optimism and ingenuity of the human spirit. Do you think that your time in Northern Alberta had a part to play in that?

AB: Oh yes. It really placed a heavy emphasis on the exercise of human agency, in that one had to create environments and the opportunities because of the limited resources. For example, in education we had one schoolhouse that housed first grade through high school. There were only two teachers teaching the entire high school curriculum, which meant that they were poorly equipped in many of the subject matters.

We pilfered the trigonometry answer book and brought the class to a screeching halt, so we had to educate ourselves. The self-regulatory skills have served me well as I moved on through the higher levels of education systems.

SD: Could you talk a little about your transition from the one-room schoolhouse to the University of British Columbia, onto the University of Iowa and finally to the balmy palms of Stanford in the early 1950s?

AB: My parents encouraged me to expand my experiences during my summer breaks. They essentially presented me with two options: I could either remain in Mundare, till the farmland, play pool and drink myself to oblivion in the beer parlor, or I might try to get a higher education. The latter option seemed more appealing to me. During summer breaks I worked in a door company in Edmonton.

In my final summer break before my senior year in high school, I explained to my parents that there was a job in the Yukon with an attractive monthly stipend. This was a base camp for maintaining the Alaska Highway from sinking into the muskeg.

This wasn't "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood." It was an interesting bunch of characters who were escaping draft boards, probation officers, irate ex-wives and creditors. As

part of my job, I drove into Whitehorse to retrieve supplies. I soon realized that the supplies consisted mainly of booze. That turned out to be the camp's main nutrient.

When it came time to pack for college, I looked for a more benign climate. The University of British Columbia seemed to fit that bill very well.

There were a couple of elements that highlighted the fortuitous character of life. Psychologists are interested in explaining, predicting and modifying behavior. But some of the most important determinants of life paths can occur through the most trivial of circumstances.

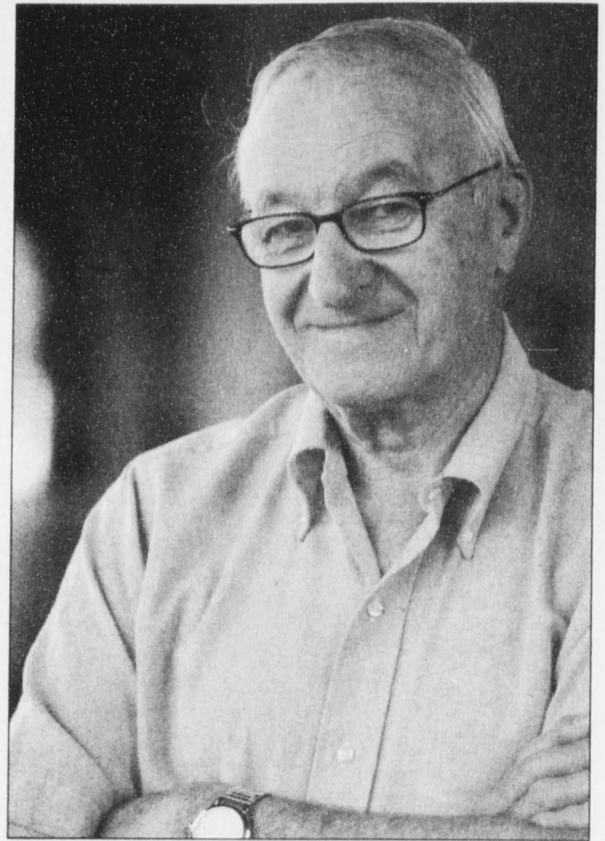
I got into psychology through a fortuitous event. I was commuting with a group of pre-meds and engineering students; they had classes in the early morning — I didn't think life existed that early! One morning, I was wasting time in the library. Someone had forgotten to return a course catalog and I thumbed through it attempting to find a filler course to occupy the early time slot. I noticed a course in psychology that would serve as excellent filler. It sparked my interest and I found my career.

In another fortuitous element, [the university] required two physical education courses for graduation. [After trying indoor PE, outdoor PE and archery], I made a hasty downward descent and decided to register for a golf course. One Sunday during graduate school, my friend and I decided to play a round of golf. There were two women ahead of us. They were slowing down, we were speeding up. Before long, we became a jovial couple. I met my wife-to-be in the sand trap!

When I was the president of the Western Psychological Association, I decided to select a topic that was unpredictable, on the grounds that being predictable is boring. I addressed the psychology of chance encounters, marital partnerships and occupational life paths. I decided to bring some science on the fortuitous character of life.

I received my doctoral degree in 1952 at the University of Iowa and joined the faculty at Stanford in 1953. I [recently completed my] 56th year at Stanford. That's more than half a century. As the saying goes, it's not the amount of miles traveled but the amount of tread you have left that makes a difference. I'm saddled up for the next half century.

I recently received an email from a high school student in advanced psychology. He explained that they were having a heated debate. The email read, "Dear Professor Bandura, are you still living?" I replied, "This email is being written from the other side."



JEFF KEACHER/The Stanford Daily

SD: When you came to Stanford in the early 1950s, the Department of Psychology was housed in Cubberley. It has since moved to Jordan Hall in the Main Quad. What are some of the other major changes on campus that you've witnessed throughout your many years on the Farm?

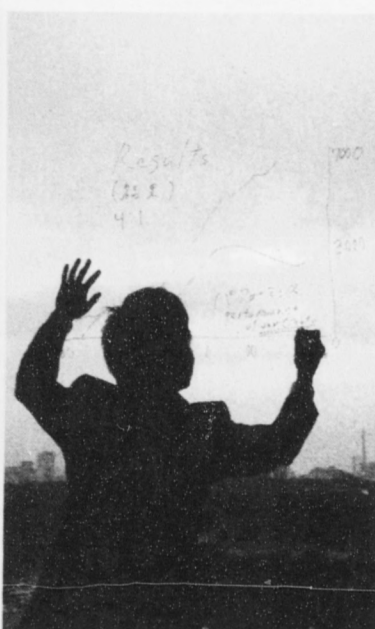
AB: When I arrived at Stanford, our psychology department only had only about 10 faculty members. The University was a much smaller place, centered around the Quadrangle.

Stanford underwent a major transformational change in the late 1950s and early 1960s. For every faculty position a committee was formed to identify the top scholar in that field. Departments received additional billets. The decision was made to relocate the Medical School from San Francisco to the main campus to integrate the sciences with the social sciences.

That was an extraordinary time to be at Stanford, as the University was undergoing the transformation into one of the top universities in the world.

Please see **BANDURA**, page 5

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ECONOMY

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downturn and promoting the importance of the financial rescue plan.

"I propose that the federal government reduce the risk posed by these troubled assets and supply urgently needed money so banks and other financial institutions can avoid collapse and resume lending," Bush said. "This rescue effort is not aimed at preserving any individual company or industry. It is aimed at preserving America's overall economy."

Similarly, Paulson, Bernanke and presidential candidates Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) have also made similar statements urging swift government action.

"We don't know if Congress will pass the bill [proposed by Paulson] in an unencumbered manner," Duffie said. "Even if the bill passes quickly, there are still questions of whether it will be effective in stopping the credit crisis. We are still in an extremely fragile period."

Prospects for Wall Street Hopefuls

As Wall Street contemplates its rapid decline and brainstorms methods to salvage the banking model, Stanford's Wall Street hopefuls speculate about the job security of the financial field. Last spring, when investment bank Bear Stearns was bought out by JPMorgan Chase, job offers for new hires were withdrawn.

"The recruiting activity by investment banks has dropped," said Lance Choy, director of the Stanford Career Development Center (CDC). "There are concerns about further mergers, many banks don't exist and others have cut back quite a bit."

While Bank of America bought out Merrill Lynch, and Barclays bought (subject to regulatory approval) the North America investment banking and trading divisions of Lehman Brothers, large mergers require a substantial period of transition, which means these firms will not be hiring anytime soon either.

Choy encouraged students to think broadly and have backup plans for jobs or summer internships.

"How many people are truly

interested in finance, rather than interested just because their friends are doing it?" Choy asked. "There are many pathways to doing great and interesting things, and Wall Street is merely one career path. Students need to spend more time looking at different options."

"Recruiting will be down for the financial side of the market, but there are many other sectors of the job market that are doing well," Choy added. "Our recruiting schedule is full."

Emily Hsi '09, who interned at an investment bank over the summer, differentiated between the hiring prospects of different jobs in finance.

"Stanford students who go into the banking industry usually work in sales and trading or investment banking," Hsi said. "Sales and trading has probably been hit harder than investment banking."

"It's definitely not a good time to become a trader, but investment banking will definitely pick up in the future," the senior added.

Traditionally during difficult market conditions, those employed in the financial sector choose to return to school, typically to pursue either MBAs or law degrees. The increased application volume usually causes the admission rate of graduate schools to decrease during economic downturns.

"I suspect that with the investment banking sector down, there might also be increased interest in consulting, Teach for America and the Peace Corps," Choy said.

Nedu Ottih '10, who interned at Lehman Brothers over the summer, said he remains interested in finance and business, but may explore jobs outside of investment banking, such as consulting or corporate finance, in light of the financial uncertainty.

"I'm re-evaluating the situation," Ottih said. "The industry is changing really fast. At the moment, there aren't that many deals being done due to the credit crisis and how expensive it is to borrow money. The excitement of working on live projects has fizzled out for now."

"I'm just watching closely to see what happens over the next few months," he added.

As will the rest of the world.

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WHITE PLAZA

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to traffic."

Funding for the project came mostly from a \$4 million gift from the President's Fund, although other gift funds were used for certain parts of the construction.

Students may come to appreciate the new White Plaza once construction has completely finished. According to Blake, getting approval from the Board of Trustees pushed the start date of the project into late spring, making it difficult for manufacturers to provide necessary parts. While actual construction has been completed, the University is still waiting on contract manufacturers to deliver a number of items.

"Everything is not finished, and there are a few things we are aware of that are going to change," Blake said. "All the trash bins, the benches

and the light fixtures are not quite there. There are some cables for student banners that are not up yet."

Soon, a canopy for the newly constructed stage will be built as part of the project's second phase. University officials are currently working with prospective users of the stage to make sure the canopy meets student demands.

Blake said the White Plaza renovations have actually gone more smoothly than other recent projects, such as the Serra Mall renovations. Most of the construction was completed in two and a half months.

The class of 2012 seems not to be bothered by the plaza changes.

"When I stood out there last week with the frosh, 80 percent of the people were going as they were supposed to do," Blake said. "As long as the majority of people are following the travel routes, that's all we really hope for."

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BANDURA

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SD: In your storied career, you have won several awards, including the Grawemeyer Award and the American Psychological Association's Lifetime Achievement Award, and authored numerous books, advanced theories of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy and agency. What do you consider to be your crowning achievement, and what are you most proud of in your professional life?

AB: The crowning achievement is what you do next. That is the challenge that assures continual self-renewal. To hang around a place for over half a century requires a high capacity for self-renewal.

My work has centered on the theory of human agency and the mechanisms by which it is exercised. Most of our psychological and philosophical analyses are concerned only with individual-level agency. I expanded the notion of agency into three forms: direct personal agency, which is one's ability to exercise control over events on which you have some influence; proxy agency, in which we exercise influence over others to act on our behalf; and collective agency, in which we work together to shape our future.

The theory of self-efficacy garners many citations because it lends itself readily to social applications. The work on self-regulation plays a very influential role in the field of education. Self-efficacy also played a role in the field of health, transforming the discipline from essentially a disease model to a health model.

Perhaps the most ambitious applications of the theory are the global

applications to address some of the most pressing global issues. There are long-running serial dramas that have been shown throughout the developing world, in Africa, India, China and Latin America. These global productions are increasing national literacy, promoting family planning, raising the status of women and stemming the tide of HIV/AIDS.

For example, in Sudan, women are subjected to a brutal genital mutilation procedure. In our serial drama, a series of plotlines were included that involved a young girl to whom the viewers are deeply bonded undergoing this brutal procedure and Muslim clerics explaining that this practice is not sanctioned by their religion. Before our serial drama, approximately 57 percent of the population supported the practice; afterwards, 60 percent favored abolishing the gruesome practice.

These are widespread global applications of the theory that address issues of ecological sustainability. I recently wrote a paper on impeding ecological sustainability through selective moral disengagement. We are rapidly destroying our planet, while adopting token gestures that make us feel like environmentalists. Much of my current research is focused on large-scale applications designed to provide a habitable planet for future generations.

Please see <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/self-efficacy.html#bandura> for more information about Prof. Bandura and his work.

Visit The Daily's Web site (stanford-daily.com) for an extended version of this article.

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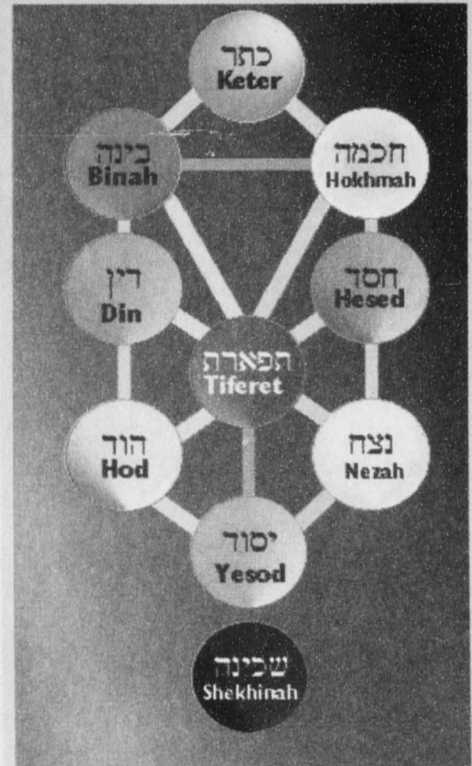
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DAVE

Continued from Front page

ollected to a tearful audience here at one basketball game, Super Dave gladly took the place of an absent drummer.

During the service, the Band performed "Hail, Stanford, Hail," along with Dave's personal favorite, "All Right Now."

"We were all sobbing while we were playing," Masching said. "But it was the perfect tribute. His parents thanked us after. The funeral really helped the Band come to peace with his death."

Contact Amanda Zhang at amandaz@stanford.edu.



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NEWS BRIEFS

Researchers find way to treat Leukemia

By THE DAILY NEWS STAFF

Researchers at the School of Medicine have discovered a new method to treat a lethal form of leukemia based on a molecular signal that regulates cell growth.

In the past, the molecular signal "glycogen synthase kinase 3" (GSK 3) had been shown to limit certain types of cellular growth, which could prevent a variety of manifestations of cancer. However, research by Dr. Michael Cleary and his team found that GK3 also affects white blood cells, and actually encourages a type of white blood cell cancer.

Most leukemia cases begin with bad cells in the lymph nodes or the bone marrow, which are the production sites of white blood cells. Such cancers account for five to 10 percent of leukemia cases.

Cleary's findings indicate GSK3 may be an effective target for future leukemia drugs, and the team is starting to search for high-potency GSK3 inhibitors that can safely be given to humans. Since GSK3 normally slows the growth of healthy bone marrow stem cells, it is possible that giving GSK3 inhibitors can have the benefit of killing both the cancerous white blood cells and promoting growth of healthy stem cells, such as those given in a bone marrow transplant.

Former engineering prof. passes away

By THE DAILY NEWS STAFF

John Fondahl, professor of civil engineering for 35 years, died of melanoma Sept. 12 at age 83.

Fondahl retired in 1990 after becoming an expert on the use of math to assess large construction projects and the roadblocks that could plague such projects. According to The Stanford Report, one of his most influential publications, "Non-Computer Approach to the Critical Path Method for the Construction Industry," sold over 20,000 copies in more than 20 languages.

Born in Washington D.C. in 1924, Fondahl joined the Marines as a teenager and fought for the island of Iwo Jima during World War II.

Later, at Stanford, Fondahl founded the Construction Institute — one of the first industry-affiliate programs at the University, according to The Report. The professor and two former students then founded the Construction Data System Corporation, which applied Fondahl's scheduling techniques to large, complex infrastructure projects.

Plans are being assembled for a memorial service in Memorial Church sometime during late October.



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