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Ronald Taft, Hon FAPS

Ronald Taft was born in Melbourne in 1920 and graduated in Arts from Melbourne University in 1939. He obtained his MA in Psychology at Columbia University in New York and, after a period as an industrial psychologist in war industries, completed his PhD at Berkeley, California. He has a distinguished record as a teacher of psychology in Monash University (Professor of Social Psychology from 1968 to 1981), in the University of Melbourne (Reader in Psychology 1966-68) and in the University of Western Australia (Senior Lecturer, 1951-56, Reader, 1957-65). The main thrust of his teaching was in social psychology and personality but he also covered general and educational psychology.

Ron has a distinguished and quite full and diverse research and publication record in fields such as personality assessment and dynamics, ethnicity and immigration and social and cultural psychology. He earned an international reputation for his pioneering research and publications in the field of ethnicity and the psychology of immigration which he commenced in the 1950s and continued for 30 years. His work in the 1950s on personality assessment was also heavily cited in the international literature. In 1976 Ron was awarded the Silver Medal by the Royal Society of Victoria for his contributions to scientific research.

Ron has played an important part in promoting psychology as a discipline and as a profession. He was a foundation member in 1944 of the Australian Branch of the BPS and was Chairman in 1962-3. He was also a foundation member of the APS in which he was, at various times, Chairman of the Membership and Publications Committees, and, as Chair of the Course Accreditation Committee was an early influence on the establishment by the APS of guidelines for the recognition for professional purposes of university courses in psychology. At present he is a member of the APS Archives Committee.

In the 1980s Ron was active as the Australian representative in international psychology organizations. He was President of the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP), and was on the Executive Committees of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) and the Union of Psychological Science (IUPS). He is also Fellow of the American Psychology Society.

Ron has been a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia since 1964 and was the foundation Chair of the National Committee for Psychology in the Australian Academy of Sciences.