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Psi Chi Chapter President: Eric Levine  
Psi Chi Faculty Advisor: Dr. Paul



## Bio-Blast: Mary Ann Rafoth, Ph.D.

Dean, School of Ed. & Social Sciences  
by Eric Levine & Courtney Langston

Dr. Rafoth joined RMU in 2011 and has already made the school even better than it was. In addition to her daily responsibilities as Dean, Dr. Rafoth enjoys being in the classroom. *“One of the things I love about RMU is that I can continue to teach.”* Her passion for teaching and willingness to guide is well represented by her interactions with students and colleagues.



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Dr. Rafoth firmly believes that getting involved is what makes a student successful. *“Student organizations are really a stepping stone to becoming professionals. You get an opportunity to take a leadership role within the discipline, as a student. It’s not so much the number of things you’re in; the depth of a single participation is more important than 5 superficial ones. Anybody that is applying [to grad school] has good grades, often good test scores, so what differentiates you? It’s your leadership roles, and if you can be involved in research.”*

*nominated for Psi Chi, and because psychology is a profession where most people go on to greater degrees, you’re tapping into the future leaders of the profession.”*

We also wanted to know about why she loves being a dean. *“What I like about it is the ability to make a difference and help other people. For great things to happen you have to let people do it; they just want to be allowed. They will develop great programs and great opportunities. I can make a difference by giving these fantastic faculty members and students opportunities that they’ll run with. I enjoy the greater ability to make things happen for people.”*

What type of leader are you? *“I try to be a collaborative leader. If you can facilitate, then people want to go in the right direction. I guess it’s kind of Rogerian in the idea that with light and water and sun, the plant grows right.”*

Though students may not know Dean Rafoth they should know that her presence is reflected throughout Social Sciences by her financial and personal support of clubs, campus events, and classroom activities.

If you get the chance to talk with her, you will find her friendly disposition and overwhelming sense of pride and professionalism to be quite contagious!

### Important Dates

- ◆ Fall finals: 12-10-2012
- ◆ Winter break 12-17-2012!
- ◆ Spring semester starts: 1-14-2013
- ◆ Deadline to apply for spring graduation: 1-28-2013
- ◆ Spring Break: 3-11-2013
- ◆ Summer registration starts: 3-25-2013
- ◆ Last day to withdraw: 4-16-2013
- ◆ WPUPC: 4-20-2013
- ◆ Spring finals: 4-30-2013
- ◆ Graduation: 5-11-2013

She feels RMU offers advantages to students over other schools. *“I think it’s really important to engage with your professors, and you have that opportunity at RMU, particularly in psychology. The classes are small, and the professors are really interested in having you develop with a unique product in your thesis and practicum. When you’re in psychology, you find an aspect to fall in love with and want to study and work with all your life. And the professors reflect that passion.”*

Another advantage RMU offers is Psi Chi. Its mission of advancing the science of psychology is apparent in their service. *“It’s an old honorary, a well-known honorary where every good psychology program has Psi Chi. It’s very selective and represents the top students, not just in psychology, but in the university. It truly is an honor to be*

*“The purpose of psychology is to give us a completely different idea of the things we know best.”*

**Paul Valéry**

### 2012 Psi Chi Officers!

- ◆ April Bucek [Vice-President]
- ◆ Courtney Langston [Event Planner]
- ◆ Eric Levine [President]
- ◆ Maegan Lewis [Secretary]
- ◆ Gina Mercuri [Psychology Club Liaison]
- ◆ Jamie Witsch [Meeting Coordinator]



*“Our errors are surely not such awfully solemn things. In a world where we are so certain to incur them in spite of all our caution, a certain lightness of heart seems healthier than this excessive nervousness on their behalf.”*

**William James**

## The Fun Theory

*Gina Mercuri*

Recently I discovered a unique initiative by Volkswagen (yes, the German car manufacturer) for people to come up with fun ways to change behavior.

The idea was cool because it looked at psychology principles applied to the real world. *The Fun Theory* was open to people’s suggestions on how to make human behavior better, in simple, easy, and, of course, fun ways.

An example in Stockholm was a stairway that was changed into a giant piano to get people to use the stairs instead of the escalator. As a result, 66% more people than normal used the stairs!

Another example was a man who proposed that drivers caught on camera disobeying the speed limit have to pay a fine, but people caught obeying the speed limit got a chance to win that money in a lottery. With almost 25,000 drivers, the average speed decreased from 32 to 25 km/h. Fun ideas, right?

This was an entertaining look at using fun, simple things to change behavior. I think it is fascinating to see how much can be applied from the field to influence behavior. Be sure to check out [thefuntheory.com](http://thefuntheory.com) for videos, and remember that psychology can be fun!

## Psychobabbles with Dr. William Kelly

*Interviews by April Bucek & Maegan Lewis*

Dr. Kelly joined the department in 2006 and is already a full professor. He received his doctorate in Counseling Psychology at Louisiana Tech University in 2000. He maintains an active research program studying individual differences.

Ψ Who is your favorite psychologist that does NOT rhyme with Shkelly?

DK: *“Carl Rogers because he was a pioneer in clinical research and first to recognize importance of therapeutic research. Also, Mckinley, the author of the MMPI, because it took him 10+ years to come up with it and that shows perseverance.”*

Ψ If you were a sloth, would you like to climb a tree or a building?

DK: *“A tree, because I wouldn’t be as likely to fall and break my sloth neck.”*

Ψ Do you even like sloths?

DK: *“Not particularly, no. I’m more of a mammoth type of guy.”*

Ψ What is your favorite brain part?

DK: *“Frontal lobe.”*

Ψ Would you prefer that section with or without BBQ sauce?

DK: *“With.”*

Ψ Say you are dead, what would your eulogy say about you?

DK: *“It’s about time; we have been trying to get rid of him for years.”*

Ψ In your opinion, is there a therapy that is most effective?

DK: *“No. They are all equally effective if they include what they are supposed to include.”*

Ψ What is your favorite candy?

DK: *“Well, I am not a candy fan-However, I knew a Candy once and she kind of smelled.”*

Ψ If you could trade places with any other person for a day, famous or not famous, living or dead, real or fictional; with whom would it be?

DK: *“Teddy Roosevelt because he had a cool mustache.”*

Ψ Do dreams have meanings?

DK: *“I believe that people create meanings for their dreams.”*

Ψ What would I find in your refrigerator right meow? Yes, I said right **meow!**

DK: *“CATsup. Milk. Unused condiments. Diet Coke. Assorted fruits. Thawing beef. Various parts of former enemies.”*

Ψ What is your all-time favorite quote?

DK: *“Follow your bliss (author unknown).”*

Ψ Thank you for the interview Dr. Kelly, but one last question: Why did you move to Pittsburgh?

DK: *“I like depressing weather. And the interview was my pleasure!”*

## Student Cognitions: *John Watson*

Eric Levine

It is not very common to change the field in which you study. It is even less common to have such an impact that you are considered a driving force behind the transformation of an entire discipline. John Broadus Watson was just that, but the way he influenced the science of psychology may shock and amaze you; in fact, I guarantee it!

John B. Watson as a young adult would be considered a rebel with an attitude driven by satisfaction from spite (not nice). Raised as one of six children by his single mother, he spent most of his childhood moving from town to town.



John was supposed to be a minister, but tarnished that path by being arrested twice; *"once for fighting and once for shooting firearms inside city limits"* (p 318). In 1894 he enrolled in Greenville's Furman University where he was introduced to philosophy and psychology. Although he excelled in classes he was held back a year for "turning in a paper backwards." (Whatever that means...) He devoted the next years of his life to earning a Ph.D. purely out of spite for that teacher who later wrote to Watson asking to work under him. Watson was ultimately cheated of his revenge. Before arrangements could be made, that professor's health failed.

Watson found his true calling when he attended graduate school in Chicago where he dazzled everyone with his trained rats. The reason he was so good at observing and manipulating the behavior of rats was because he

was working as an assistant janitor for Donaldson's lab to pay his way. One of his duties was to take care of Donaldson's rats.

Watson was recognized for his doctoral efforts and was eventually offered the position of Director of the Psychological Laboratory at Johns Hopkins University. He quickly pressured the administration to separate psychology from philosophy and strengthen the link between biology. This was the beginning of "behaviorism" that came into fruition behind his brilliant observations.

Watson had a very strong dislike of introspection (an inward focus on mental experiences without any observable congruency); so much so that he felt it was the single thing holding psychology back from predictive accuracy. *"I do not wish to unduly criticize psychology, it has failed signally. I believe, during the fifty-odd years of its existence as an experimental discipline to make its place in the world as an undisputed natural science."* To illustrate this, he showed how the pleasure effect of the male rat during the onset of a female rat could be explained physiologically. Unfortunately, this was far ahead of its time. However, this sparked his interest in working with infants while studying the development of emotional reactions; mainly fear, rage, and love. This led to his most famous and controversial experiment - Little Albert.

Albert was afraid of suddenly produced loud sounds at just 9 months old, and Watson used this to springboard into conditioning fear by pairing that stimulus (a loud sound) with a white rat. When Albert reached for the rat, a loud noise was presented behind him and naturally, he responded by jumping violently, falling forward, and starting to whimper. A week later Albert received five more of these types of fear presentations and was tested almost a week later to see if he was still afraid of the rat (he was). He was also tested to see if his fear

would generalize to other similar objects like a rabbit, a dog, and a Santa Clause mask. (It did.) Albert left the hospital right after the final tests and therefore never had his fear conditioning removed.

Watson endured the criticism of many as he paved the path for the shift in psychology from a consciousness based discipline to a hard scientific approach by studying and observing human and animal behavior. It was said, *"Second only to Freud, John B. Watson is, in my judgment, the most important figure in the history of psychological thought during the first half of the century"* (Bergmann, 1956, p 265). Appropriately, Watson was honored by the APA (American Psychological Association) in 1957 with their Gold Medal Award, less than a year before his death.

Fittingly, a final regard was spoken about John B. Watson, *"Yet I have not the slightest doubt that, with all the light and all the shadow, he is a very major figure. Psychology owes him so much. His place in the history of our civilization is not inconsiderable and it is secure. Such men are exceedingly rare. We ought to accept them and appreciate them for what they are"* (p 276).

### Resources

- Bergmann, G. (1956). The contribution of John B. Watson. *Psychological Review*, 63, 265-276.
- Thorne, B. M., & Henley, T. B. (1997). *Connections in the history and systems of psychology*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

*"If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life."*

Abraham Maslow



## Psychology Club Update

This semester the RMU Psychology Club welcomed Dr. Samantha Monda as their new faculty advisor. Plans are also underway for the Psychology Club to partner with Psi Chi on a number of activities.

(1) **The CM-Experiments.** Psi Chi has been pretty successful with this “top secret” event over the past few

semesters. This event is typically limited to no more than thirty participants and we do provide refreshments! The activity lasts from 2 to 3 hours but the time FLIES by! If you get the chance to sign up for a CM-Experiment, please do so!

(2) **Psychology in a Box.** Psi Chi is working on a “psychology fair” type

of event which would bring high school juniors and seniors to RMU for a half-day of psychology activities. Psi Chi and Psychology Club members will host small demonstration sessions that cover different psychology fields. Our goal is to represent many fields and be ready-to-go-again so we can host future events at any time.

## Optical Illusion

This is called the “Evening Dusk” optical illusion created by Japanese psychologist Akiyoshi Kitaoka. The effect takes place in the center of each image. The one on the right probably looks brighter to you than the center of the image on the left. However, the amount of light reflected is the same for both.

What is notable about the images in this illusion is that they produce a pupil reaction. Scientists once believed that pupil dilation was a direct consequence of amount of light

(without having to involve the brain). This illusion, though, proves that the brain IS involved. Because your brain believes there is more light reflected

from the center of one image, it tells your pupils to close up. This means that both your eyes and your brain are being fooled by this illusion!



## Psychology Jumble

Unscramble the words below to find the letters (indicated by stars) that belong in the caption to the cartoon!

1) T T I V O M O A N I  
 \* \* \* \*

2) S O G O L Y P C H Y  
 \* \* \*

3) S R A E C R E H  
 \* \* \* \*

4) R I S D A I U N T L  
 \* \*



**RMU Psi Chi**  
 Campus Box 1556  
 Robert Morris University  
 6001 University Blvd.  
 Moon Twp, PA 15108

**Phone (Dr. Paul):**  
 (412) 397-5416

**Fax: (412) 397-2411**

**E-mail:**  
 PsiChi@mail.rmu.edu

**Web:**  
<https://sites.google.com/a/mail.rmu.edu/psichi/Home>

**Twitter:**  
 @RMU\_PsiChi

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