



JAMES P. O'BRIEN

James P. O'Brien, Professor of Psychology at the Virginia Beach Campus of Tidewater Community College, earned the Ph.D. in Human Factors Psychology with a minor concentration in Engineering & Systems Design from The Catholic University of America in 1977. He also holds a Master of Science degree in General-Applied Psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University (1970) and a B.A. in Psychology with a minor in Chemistry from the University of Richmond (1966), where he also attended T. C. Williams School of Law (1966-67). Dr. O'Brien has authored more than three dozen research papers and technical reports and, from 1981-84 as a consultant for A. E. McMichael and Associates (Virginia Beach VA), coauthored the 5-volume *Soldier Dimension in Battle* study for the Department of the Army.

Dr. O'Brien was drawn to a teaching career by multiple assistantships and adjunct lectureships in a variety of courses at the undergraduate and graduate level at VCU and CUA prior to joining the faculty at TCC in 1972. He also served for a time as Chair of the Division of Social Sciences at TCC's Virginia Beach Campus.

In addition to teaching, Jim was an early leader in distance learning, particularly in using television courses, based on London's Open University model, to serve non-traditional students. In 1988, he designed and continues to teach a two-semester honors research course. Honors students become members of the Virginia Academy of Science, study research ethics and methodology and are required to present their research to a scientific society and publish their results. Approximately 35 of his students have presented papers to Sections of the Virginia Academy of Science and the Virginia Social Science Association, and abstracts of their research have been published in the *Virginia Journal of Science*. Dr. O'Brien also founded the campus's Psi Chi Phi Psychology Students Association and has served as its Faculty Advisor since its inception. He has been recognized for teaching excellence by the Virginia Beach Campus Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society (1977).

Jim joined the Virginia Academy of Science in 1974 and was Psychology Section Chair (3 terms), Secretary (4 terms), Vice Chair (3 terms) and Representative to the Academy Council (2 terms); he also chaired the Section's Invited Lecture Series. On Council he chaired several Academy committees including the Executive Committee, Nominations and Elections, News and Information, Public Affairs, Membership, and the 70th Annual Meeting Scientific Program. He was co-chair of the Publications Committee, a member of the Futures Committee and the 75th Anniversary Committee, and served 3 terms on the Junior Academy of Science Committee. In 1990, he was founding editor of the Academy's newsletter, *Virginia Scientists*. He is currently chair of the Fund Raising Committee and coordinator of Leadership Retreats.

In 1993-94, James P. O'Brien served as the 71st President of the Virginia Academy of Science. He was instrumental in the creation of three new Academy Sections; Computer Science, Archaeology, Natural History and Biodiversity; and facilitated the growth of other Sections. He led the effort to move the Academy's headquarters to the Science Museum of Virginia, a magnificent facility for science education whose founding the Academy had spearheaded over a 40year period. Jim renewed the Academy's traditional role in providing volunteer expertise to state agencies by organizing consultants to assist the Commonwealth in the design of the Southwestern Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon. He also strengthened alliances with V-QUEST, the Council of Virginia Archaeologists, Virginia Psychological Foundation, Virginia Natural History Society, Virginia Association of Science Teachers, and the Virginia Geographic Alliance. With the assistance of the Academy's Committee on the Environment, he established annual sessions on Virginia Universities' Commitment to the Environment and worked with the late Dr. James D. McComas, then president of Virginia Tech, to encourage Virginia signatories to the international Talloires Declaration: University Presidents for a Sustainable Future. With Dr. Ronald E. Carrier, President of James Madison University, he established the Academy's Virginia Colleges Scholarship Program which designates over \$25,000 in awards to Virginia's high school students.

A member of the Virginia Social Science Association since 1973, Jim currently serves on the Editorial Board of the *Virginia Journal of Social Science*. In 1993, he was recognized by the VSSA with its Distinguished Scholar in Psychology Award. He has been a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science since 1970 and is a member of its sections for Psychology, General Science and Engineering, and Education. He has served as a publications consultant to AAAS's *Science* magazine, Prentice-Hall, West, Brooks/Cole, and Worth publishing companies and the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

In the community, Jim serves on the Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension and is chair of the Christian Education Commission. He is a volunteer with the Norfolk Emergency Shelter Team and Full Circle AIDS Hospice Meals Program, is a member of the Board of Reeves for the Old Dominion University Canterbury Center, and is a charter member of the Elizabeth River Project. He was Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Norfolk SPCA, served on the Virginia Beach Public Schools Research Advisory Committee, and was a Cub Scout Pack and Boy Scout Troop leader. A retired Army Reserve officer, Jim resides in Norfolk with his wife, Mary Louise Wittkofski O'Brien, and two sons, Christopher, a William and Mary sophomore, and Andrew, who is a student at Norfolk Academy.