

Resolution on the Retirement of Professor Emily Bushnell

With this resolution, the faculty in the Department of Psychology recognizes the career of our colleague and friend, Professor Emily W. Bushnell.

Emily received her B.A. in Psychology from Swarthmore College in 1972. She came to Tufts in 1979 after receiving a Ph.D. in Child Psychology from the University of Minnesota. She was promoted to Associate Professor in 1986, and Full Professor in 1996. Emily is a developmental psychologist who is fascinated with how our minds and behaviors change as we grow. In particular she was focused on how children experience the world through touch and their actions, conducting numerous important studies on infant cognitive and motor development. Beginning with her time in graduate school and continuing throughout her 34 years as a Tufts' faculty member, Emily's research has illuminated our understanding of infants' cognitive and motor behavior in the context of functional activities such as reaching for, touching, carrying, and imitating the use of objects and tools.

In a way, Emily brought the inner child out in all of us. Her lab was literally a playroom: filled with all manner of strange and novel toys and contraptions. Her waiting area offered the opportunity for brief, usually pleasant, interactions with babies and children of various ages. For her colleagues, visits to her lab were a little like recess – a respite from the regular activities of the day. But make no mistake: every object and every toy was in fact a tool carefully designed to permit specific tests of experimental hypotheses. A playroom indeed: one designed for the scientific exploration of the processes underlying the development of learning.

It is often said that “art imitates life”. The same can be said of Emily's “art” – her creative and precise scholarship – as it reflects her professional and personal life. In her work, Emily studies how infants plan, explore, develop, and learn through action. In her life, she embodies these ideals of learning and exploration through action. Emily's service to her discipline, her students, the department, and the University has been exemplary.

Emily is a well-respected and active member in the field of developmental psychology. She has served in a variety of ways: on the editorial board for the two premier developmental journals, on study sections charged with the review of research proposals for the National Institutes of Health, and as program chair for the international meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development.

Like the infants in her lab, Emily engages the world around her *actively*, with wide eyes and boundless enthusiasm. As a scholar, Emily enjoys those meetings where she feels that she learns as much as she teaches. Long interested in emphasizing developmental processes across a wide range of psychological functioning, she has participated in numerous special workshops around the world such as meetings focused on the psychobiology of the hand in England, how differences in cross modal functioning might underlie schizophrenia in Switzerland, the role of the earliest human tool making activity in France, and most recently on the interaction of developmental psychology and cognitive robotics in Germany.

Her scholarly contributions have been complemented by the energy and enthusiasm she devotes to teaching, mentoring, advising, and service activities. In addition to leadership positions as department

chair and on the Executive and Tenure and Promotion Committees, Emily served on the executive board of the Tufts Chapter of the American Association of University Professors for over 10 years, working toward equitable compensation for faculty; particularly women and minorities. These and other activities were undertaken with the same tenacity and attention to detail that Emily exhibits in the lab. We are all better off for her efforts.

In talks, she engages the topics presented by visiting speakers with zeal, providing keen observations about the implications of their research designs and the theories they purport to address. In social functions, she is eager to move, trying (often in vain!) to get her colleagues to dance instead of stand around. As a die-hard Celtics fan with season tickets, Emily engages her colleagues and students with invitations to games -- not to sit and passively observe, but to actively, and vocally root for the Green! Away from Tufts, she enjoys activities such as biking, hiking, white-water canoeing, and playing poker. The pursuit of these pastimes has taken her around the world, from the fertile farmlands of Minnesota to the relative desolation of the Australian Outback. Emily is an explorer and adventurer at heart, a passion reflected in her active explorations of the inner mind and the outer world – and a quality she will have ample time to develop and share as she plans to spend more time with her two adult children and three grandchildren out West.

Ironically, Emily could not be here with us today because she is recovering from hip surgery. Have no doubt, however, that before long she will be able to resume the lifestyle exemplified by her work: exploring the world through action and the eyes of a child – always growing, always developing, and always, *always* learning.

On behalf of the faculty in the Department of Psychology, and the countless other faculty, undergraduate and graduate students whose lives Emily has “touched” over the years, I move that this resolution on the retirement of Emily W. Bushnell be spread on the permanent record of this faculty and that a copy of it be sent to her.

May 15, 2013