

John W. Cotton - Professor Emeritus 1993

John Cotton received his B.A. in Psychology from Willamette University in 1947. He pursued graduate study at Indiana University where he was awarded the M.A. degree in 1950 and the Ph.D. in 1952. From 1951 to 1960 he was on the faculty at Northwestern University. He came to UCSB in 1960 and became Professor of Psychology in 1963. In 1966 he received a dual appointment as Professor of Psychology and Education.

His research career spanned many areas on each of which he brought to bear sophisticated quantitative and statistical analyses. He began with animal learning in which he showed that the decrease in running time with food deprivation is largely a consequence of a reduction in competing responses. He later turned to human concept identification where he showed that the specific sequence of stimuli presented controls the learning process. In the School of Education he worked on computer assisted instruction and artificial intelligence. Throughout his career he did research on statistical theory. He examined and extended methods for analyzing data from within-subjects designs which separate treatment effects from practices and carryover effects.

John Cotton's career was distinguished by extraordinary service to the University and the Community. He eagerly took on the most challenging teaching assignments. He was Chairperson of the Graduate Division, and Director of the UCSB Bureau of Educational Research and Development. He served with dedication on numerous committees at all levels of the University. He was a leader of several community organizations concerned with politics, religion, civil rights, and human services.