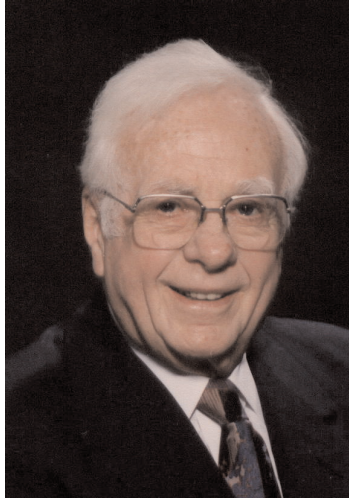


Robert R. Blake

January 21, 1918 - June 20, 2004



Robert R. Blake

Dr. Robert R. Blake, co-founder of the renowned Managerial Grid Theory, died in Austin, Texas, on Sunday, June 20, 2004. He is survived by his daughter, Cary Mercer Blake and his son, Brooks Mercer Blake, and grandsons, Christopher Michael Blake and Daniel Michael Blake.

Dr. Blake was a pioneer author and consultant who distinguished the “human side” of business leadership in the early 1950's, when the human resource development movement was in its infancy. With Dr. Jane S. Mouton, Dr. Blake formed Scientific Methods, Inc. (now Grid International, Inc.) in Austin, Texas in 1961, and co-authored, *The Managerial Grid*, a leadership theory that Harvard Business School still includes in their publication, *Business Classics: 15 Key Concepts for Managerial Success*. Blake's and Mouton's breakthrough approach included an empirical theory of behavior with a learning methodology that truly effected fundamental change, promoting excellence in organizations through and with individuals. They developed a worldwide network of

consultants, co-authored over 40 books and seminars, hundreds of articles, and consulted for governments, industries, and universities in 40 countries for almost four decades.

Dr. Blake was born January 21, 1918, in Brookline, Massachusetts. His professional life was divided between his passion for research and his passion for practical business applications. He received his B.A. degree in psychology and philosophy from Berea College (1940), a small college in Kentucky that catered to poor students of the Appalachian region. Growing up a child in the depression, Dr. Blake always reflected on his time at Berea as truly memorable and inspiring. He then earned his M.A. degree in psychology from the University of Virginia (1941). He married Mercer Shipman Blain on September 4th, 1941. He served in the Army during WWII at Randolph Field in San Antonio until his discharge in 1945. He received his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Texas at Austin (1947), where he continued as a tenured professor until 1964.

Dr. Blake lectured at Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge Universities, and worked on special extended assignments at the Tavistock Clinic, London, as a Fulbright Scholar (1949), where he participated in some of the breakthrough studies using psychoanalytic approaches in a group therapy setting. While working at Tavistock, he heard that National Training Laboratories was being established in Bethel, Maine, for the purpose of studying group behavior. He quickly arranged to spend his next summer there, which turned into a ten-year summer commitment as a faculty member, and as a board member. He reflected on those experiences throughout his career as being some of his richest learning experiences and a perfect complement to the psychoanalytic group therapy research done at Tavistock.

The NTL years also occasioned his forming one of the most pivotal relationships of his professional career, with Dr. Herbert Shepard, an Exxon employee who also served on the faculty in Bethel. Blake and Shepard joined forces to conduct a ten-year study of the Exxon Corporation that served as the building block for Scientific Methods and the first real practical application for his theory and methodology.

Dr. Blake was a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and a Diplomate in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. As a professional honor, Dr. Blake was invited to give the Korzybski Memorial

Leadership personal awareness Consensus initiative advocacy vision Critique creativity resilience
inquiry culture Conflict resolution values mutual trust & respect people innovation productivity Synergy decision making Teamwork
candor

Address in both 1961 and 1982. Additionally, he was elected to the Human Resources Hall of Fame in 1987. In 1992, he was chosen as a Management Laureate author; he also received an Honorary LL.D. from Berea College. Dr. Blake's writings were selected for inclusion in *Great Writers on Organizations* (Pugh, D.S. and Hickson, D.J.) and he was most recently acknowledged in *Outstanding Intellectuals of the 21st Century* (2003, 2nd ed.).

Dr. Blake loved traveling with his family and spanned the globe numerous times, always exploring landmarks and cultures with enthusiasm. His passion for research never waned, even after retiring in 1997. Every conversation was an opportunity to study behavior, every book, political event, or movie an opportunity for a new perspective for exploring Grid Theory. In 1995 he detailed crucial experiences at Bethel in an article in *Training and Development Journal* entitled, "Memories of HRD." He wrote that the future would look back on the field of HRD, "as crossing a great frontier, with the goal of bringing behavioral science applications into everyday use to better human activity in all their shapes and forms." Dr. Blake left an indelible mark by constantly exploring how human effectiveness emerges and how it might be enhanced.

A Remembrance Gathering will be held at Green Pastures Restaurant (811 West Live Oak, Austin, Texas) on Sunday, July 11th from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, please send contributions to: Berea College, CPO Box 2216, Berea, Kentucky 40404.

You may view memorials online here.



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