



Ralph N. Ohde, Professor Emeritus of Hearing and Speech Sciences, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, Fellow of the Acoustical Society of America, beloved teacher, and a leading authority on acoustic phonetics of adult and child speech, passed away on January 8, 2018, in Nashville. He had struggled

with Alzheimer's disease for several years.

Ralph was born and raised in northern Wisconsin and was, inevitably, a lifetime Green Bay Packers fan. In 1966, he graduated from Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin, where he excelled in theatrical productions. He earned a master's degree in speech language pathology from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, in 1968, and worked in the Kenosha public schools for three years. In 1972, Ralph returned to academia, earning a PhD at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 1978, that was followed by postdoctoral work at MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts, through 1981. Characteristically, he remained friends and collaborated with his doctoral and postdoctoral mentors, Donald Sharf and Kenneth Stevens, respectively. Ralph moved to the Bill Wilkerson Hearing & Speech Center at Vanderbilt University in 1981, where he advanced through the academic ranks and retired as professor in 2013.

Ralph's initial collaboration with his mentor Donald Sharf was fruitful, resulting in 13 publications and a book, *Phonetic Analysis of Normal and Abnormal Speech* (Ohde and Sharf, 1992). Initially, the papers focused on acoustic adaptation of feature detectors, an idea that has been given new import recently by models of speech recognition employing deep learning. Later papers emphasized the relationship between speech production and perception in children with articulation difficulties, suggesting a quasi independence of the processes (Ohde and Sharf, 1988). Ralph's sustained focus on acoustic phonetics resulted in a number of seminal articles showing the nuanced developmental differences between children's and adults' perception of speech sounds. Ralph and his collaborators showed that these effects were not sufficiently captured by dynamic specification or target normalization theories (e.g., Ohde and German, 2011).

In collaboration with Edward Conture and Courtney Byrd, Ralph's later work studied further the relationship between speech production and perception. These authors showed how children who stutter may actually have a developmental delay in shifting from holistic to incremental processing in phonological encoding (e.g., Byrd et al., 2007).

Ralph was widely recognized for his teaching and mentoring excellence. Motivated by ideas and theory development, Ralph challenged and engaged his doctoral students to think critically and discuss openly. Throughout his career, Ralph attracted young minds with research interests in hearing loss, stuttering, apraxia of speech, and human development. His contributions to their scientific development and careers were instrumental.

Ralph is survived by his wife of 47 years, Kathleen Ohde. Their interests together included antique collecting, hiking, and running.

Ralph's gentle manner and contagious laugh endeared him to everyone but especially to the generations of students he trained on both the clinical and research sides of speech science. He will be sorely missed.

Selected References by Ralph N. Ohde

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