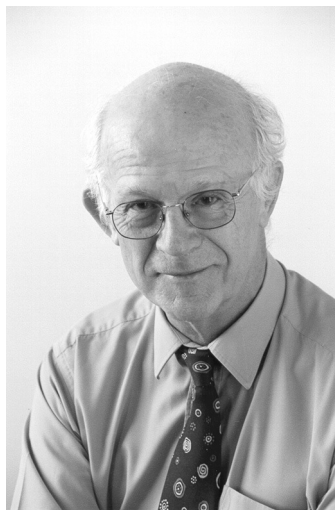


Roderick Peter McDonald was born on April 16, 1928, in Sydney, Australia. He went on to become the most internationally recognized and influential Australian quantitative psychologist of his era. His father was an accountant, his mother a trained nurse. Both were very “modern” parents, and encouraged him in academic pursuits and in his developing interest in classical music. At their waterfront house on the Parramatta River in Sydney, Rod grew up with a permanent love for swimming and sailing.

He completed a Master of Science degree in Physics (1950) at the University of Sydney. While working as a physicist he returned to study for an Arts degree, receiving an Honours degree in Psychology (1958) and the University Medal. In 1963, while teaching Experimental Psychology at the University of New England he completed his Ph.D. dissertation on nonlinear factor analysis, published in 1965 as Psychometric Monograph No. 15 - a first attempt at a unified account of factor models and item-response models. The continuing aim of his work was to give a unified, general account of psychometric theory. In 1969 he was invited to join the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, there doing further work on measurement models and structural equation models. He returned as Professor to Sydney in 1981, to the School of Education, Macquarie University. He was elected president of the Psychometric Society in 1984, and in 1990, based on his psychometric publications to that date, he received a Doctor of Science degree from Macquarie University. In 1991 he accepted an invitation to join the Quantitative Division of the Department of Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At the 2001 meeting of the Society for Multivariate Experimental Psychology he received the Sells award for Outstanding Career Contributions to Multivariate Experimental Psychology and was also elected president of the society. In 2004 he retired home to Sydney, where he was an Honorary Research Associate in the School of Psychology at the University of Sydney, and Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois and Macquarie University. He was recipient of the 2008 American Psychological Association Division 5 (Evaluation, Measurement and Statistics) Samuel J. Messick Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions. He was a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and of the Royal Statistical Society.



Despite several serious illnesses in recent years, the flame burned bright in Rod, and his lifelong love of the sea, of sailing and swimming, never diminished. Rod died suddenly at age 83 in a snorkelling accident in Jamaica on October 29, 2011.

In an interview published in 2007 in the *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, the interviewer's final question was: "And what next?". Rod responded: "I am at the University of Sydney as an honorary associate, and I still have a book to finish. But I notice that I have come full circle, from childhood in a house on a river in Sydney to retirement in another house on a river in Sydney. I sometimes regret my lost career in English poetry but still have literature to share with my wife, Avis—an associate professor of English literature. "In my end is my beginning." I crave a final indulgence. One of my heroes is Helen Waddell, the great scholar of medieval Latin literature. My present position is well described by her translation of a poem by Petronius Arbiter, first century CE:

O shore more dear to me than life! O sea!  
Most happy I that unto my own lands  
Have leave to come at last. So fair a day!  
Here it was long ago I used to swim  
Startling the Naiads with alternate stroke.  
Here is the pool, and here the seaweed sways.  
Here is the harbour for a stilled desire.  
Yea, I have lived; never shall Fate unkind  
Take what was given in that earlier hour.

Helen Waddell translates the single Latin word *pervixi* (I have lived thoroughly) as "yea, I have lived." I would like *pervixi* on my tombstone if I have one, though I fear that soon there will be few classical scholars left who understand it."

Rod leaves his wife Avis, his children Sallie, Peter, Christine and Stephanie, his sister Heather Wigert, his six grandchildren Alistair, Melanie, William, Michael, Genevieve, Gervaise, nieces and nephews, other relatives and friends – and many, many colleagues and students around the world who know they were privileged to share his time.

A memorial service will be held for Rod at 11AM on Friday February 3, 2012, at St. Luke's Anglican Church, 17 Burton Street, Concord, for all those who wish to attend.

David Grayson