

William Allen (Al) Hillix was born on March 19, 1927, on a farm in Saint Joseph, Missouri. The doctor didn't know what day it was, so he recorded his birthdate as March 18. He died on December 4, 2022, with his wife Terry by his side, in La Mesa, California. Al grew up on a farm in Camden Point, Missouri. He completed high school at the age of 16. He then attended Wentworth Military Academy (1943-1944) and entered the military, where he was sent to the University of Utah (Fall 1944-1945), Washburn Municipal University (Summer of 1945), and Oberlin College (Fall of 1945-46). After getting out of the military, he attended the University of Missouri, Columbia (1946-1948), where he completed his bachelor's degree in English.



From 1945 to 1946, he was a Naval Aviation Cadet. In 1946, when he faced the choice of reenlisting or leaving the Navy, his parents' (Allen Jasper and Anna Lee) house in Dearborn, Missouri, burned down. They asked him to help rebuild the house rather than reenlist. He did so and completed his bachelor's degree at the University of Missouri, Columbia. After graduating, he returned to Dearborn, Missouri, where he taught high school English and worked on his parent's farm. In 1952, he received a call from Melvin Marx, his former psychology professor at the University of Missouri, Columbia, offering him a research assistantship if he returned to the university as a graduate student. He took the offer. He received his Ph.D. in experimental psychology with a minor in mathematics in 1958.

As a graduate student, he started working with Melvin on a series of experiments on human learning that were first published in 1960 ("Response strengthening by information and effect in human learning"). Their work may have been the first clear demonstration that nonreinforced observation learning was more effective than trial and error followed by reinforcement. This effect was later referred to as the "observer effect." In 1963, he and Melvin published *Systems and theories in psychology* with McGraw-Hill, with several revisions until 1987. For years, it was the leading history of psychology textbook and was translated into several languages. He also published many articles with his colleagues and students on topics such as the halo effect in examiner scoring of intelligence test responses, catastrophe theory, the genealogies of American psychologists, hemispheric specialization, and secrets. In 2004, Al and Duane Rumbaugh (Georgia State University) published *Animal bodies, human minds: Ape, dolphin, and parrot language skills*. He also wrote a children's book entitled *Brownie bear and the baby pigs*.

After completing his Ph.D., Al was offered a job at the Navy Electronics Laboratory in San Diego, where he worked until 1967. He was a lecturer, assistant, and associate professor (with tenure) at San Diego State University (SDSU) from 1960 to 1967. He was then hired as Chairman and Professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, from 1967 to 1969. While there, he developed severe asthma, and a physician recommended that he return to San Diego for his health. He later discovered that the asthma was caused by his daughter's cat and

not the weather in Kansas City. He returned to San Diego State University in 1969 as a professor. He spent one year as a visiting professor at the University of Leiden, Holland, and another year at Michigan State University. He taught theoretical psychology and the history of psychology graduate classes at SDSU for many years. Upon hearing the news of Al's passing, one of his former students said, "I will always have fond memories of him as one of my most influential teachers and mentors." He started a "Friday Night Beer" for faculty and graduate students to socialize with one another. In 1987, he became chair of the SDSU's psychology department, a position he held until he retired in 1992.

He was married to Virginia Gaines from 1947 to 1962, and they had six children Gaines (Charlotte), Helen (James), Lynn (David), William (Colleen), Elaine, and Louise. He was married to Shirley Sauer from 1963 to 1980, and they had a daughter, Allison (Jacob). He had eight grandchildren (Scott, Rebecca, Chadwick, Gaines, Addie, Gera, Tory, and Makynli) and four great-grandchildren (Wyatt, Mia, Maggie, and Josie). He married Terry Cronan in 1983, and he gained many family members, including Marilyn and Patrick (Terry's parents) and brothers and sisters-in-law Thomas (Dianne), Dawn, Gregory, Susan (Jay), Lisa (Rick), Patrick (Rebecca), Douglas (Nancy), Miriam (Michael), Timothy, and Jennifer (John). Terry's brother Douglas and his daughter Rachel took excellent care of Al in his last year when Terry continued to work at SDSU. He had many beloved nieces and nephews.

In his retirement, Al volunteered to teach at SDSU for free during an economic crisis, volunteered for Senior Gleaners, and continued to edit and write with his students and colleagues. He also produced bushels of tomatoes, traveled, and played tennis into his 90's.

In lieu of flowers (if you like), you may donate to the Hillix-Cronan fund at SDSU to support a seminar room and a scholarship fund established by Jerome M. Sattler in 2009 within the Psychology Department to honor Al and Terry's contributions to the field of psychology. A celebration of life is planned for the early part of 2023.