

Michael J. Burke

SIOP President 2003-2004

I was born and raised in Binghamton, NY, an upstate city that had a superb secondary educational system and one that prospered during my youth due in large part to the success of several companies such as Endicott-Johnson and IBM, both of which had product development laboratories and manufacturing facilities in the nearby town of Endicott. My father, Joseph Burke, was a first-generation Irish-American who served in both the Navy and Army during World War II. He was one of seven brothers and sisters raised during the Great Depression, and only the second in his family to receive a college degree. He held several types of jobs with the majority of his career spent in the New York State Department of Labor as a training specialist. My mother, Mary Burke, was raised in Hornell, NY, one of five brothers and sisters, who graduated at the top of her high school class. Her family did not have the means for her to attend college, and she worked her entire career in telecommunications, beginning as a phone operator with New York Telephone and retiring as a draftsman with AT&T. I have two sisters, Mary, a nurse in Sarasota, FL, and Patricia, a federal government attorney in Washington, D.C. We grew up as part of a large, predominantly Irish Catholic family. During summer months, we would get together every Sunday after mass at my Uncle Bill and Aunt Evelyn's country house for an afternoon of barbecued "spiedies" (marinated lamb or pork on a skewer), draft beer (well, that was reserved for my 18 aunts and uncles until later years), games with my 21 cousins, and a lot of debating about politics and political characters of the day.

During my youth, I benefited from several excellent junior high science and math teachers who contributed greatly to what would become life-long interests in science and math. I am particularly thankful for having Ronald Panigrosso as a 9th grade biology teacher. He was very demanding and taught me to appreciate scientific inquiry in a hands-on manner. Several of my more memorable experiences in high school were anchoring the two-mile relay for our track team (a true "kick") and being the only male for several years in my foreign language class, French. I found that class much more attractive than German and Russian, two popular foreign language classes at the time.

I entered the University of Notre Dame in 1973 as the Vietnam War was coming to an end. During my first two years at Notre Dame, I struggled academically as I did not have strong interest in many of my general liberal arts courses and became perhaps too involved in the social life of college. By the middle of my sophomore year, I was uncertain about what to choose as a major with some interest in sociology, anthropology, and psychology. All students had to declare a major by the end of the spring semester of the sophomore year. To assist in my decision, I enrolled in a sociology course on crime, an anthropology course that focused on the Yanomamo people of the Amazon region, and a course in statistics offered by the Psychology Dept. Along with having completed an introductory course in psychology, the course in statistics led me to believe that I might have a future in the field of psychology and to declare psychology

as my major. I did not take an undergraduate course in industrial and organizational psychology, but understood that it involved the use of statistics and psychological testing (an interest I had acquired from a course taken in my junior year). I excelled academically after declaring psychology as my major. Nevertheless, in my senior year, I was rejected from all I-O psychology programs that I applied to. I had also applied to several masters programs including Indiana University-Purdue University's (IUPUI's) industrial psychology program in Indianapolis. In large part, the choice for me in the spring of 1977 was selling insurance for Northwestern Mutual in Grand Rapids, Michigan or pursuing the masters at IUPUI. I was extremely grateful for the opportunity that John Hazer, Gene Hoffman, and others at IUPUI gave me, and took advantage of every opportunity while there. At the time, I became very interested in quantitative techniques, particularly the new line of research on validity generalization procedures (the earlier term for meta-analysis techniques in personnel selection), and the general area of training and development. These interests would turn out to be career long.

Subsequent to my masters work, I was accepted without financial aid into the doctoral psychology program at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago. In the spring of 1979, I recall driving my "boat" (a 1972 Oldsmobile 88) from Indianapolis to Chicago to meet with Don Tepas (then Chairperson of Psychology) to discuss my financial aid predicament, and Don repeatedly asking if I had driven from Indy to Chicago to just discuss financial aid over a 30-minute meeting. My presumption is that if I had not taken that road trip and spent those 30 minutes with Don, then I would not be writing this biography. I had acquired a fair amount of debt (with respect to undergraduate student loans) and I did not have the means to attend IIT. IIT's Industrial-Organizational Psychology Program was my only option and it had a strong reputation for training on the practice side, which I wanted to pursue. I owe a debt of gratitude to Don Tepas and Morris Aderman (Director of the Industrial-Organizational Psychology Program) for taking a chance on me and for the generous financial support that they provided. While at IIT, my interests in pursuing practice work began to wane as I acquired more research experience and knowledge of psychometrics and advanced statistics from coursework with Nam Raju and Gary Morris.

In addition to my teaching assistant responsibilities at IIT, on one weekend of each month I would work as a substitute house parent of five boys aged 9 to 13 from broken homes. My job was simple, I only had to ensure from 5 p.m. on Friday to 5 p.m. on Sunday that they were fed and did not tear each other apart. I was tested on my first night in the home. After I had gone to bed that night, several of the boys left the home and were being held by the Chicago Police for suspicion of involvement in a murder, which they had come across. The boys were cleared and I amazingly did not lose my weekend job. Remaining employed at the home turned out to be fortuitous as I subsequently met and married a social work graduate student, Patricia Malloy, who assisted at the home. Although our contact with the boys was limited to weekends over several years, we took interest in them and often wondered in later years how they turned out. Some twenty plus years subsequent to working in the home, Pat and I reunited with the oldest

boy from the home, Adam. Adam had earned a PhD in Business and was living with his family in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, IL where, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, my family had moved for the 2005-2006 academic year. Words do little to describe our sense of amazement and happiness for Adam and his family.

In 1982, I completed my dissertation work on the development of two of the early procedures for conducting meta-analysis under the direction of Nam Raju. Nam was a wonderful mentor, colleague, and friend who I worked closely with for nearly 25 years. I was very fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend time with him, in what turned out to be his last two months on earth, while visiting IIT in the fall of 2005.

As I completed my doctoral studies in 1982, I attempted to enter the academic market, but there were very few opportunities. As a result, Glen Geist (then Chairperson of Psychology) and Nam secured a visiting professor position for me at IIT. The prospects for an academic job were no better the following year, so I made a decision to enter practice in spring 1983 with a start-up company, Psych Systems, located in Baltimore, MD. Psych Systems was the original developer of computer-administered psychological tests and computer-generated interpretive test reports. My tenure at Psych Systems was short, as the company filed for bankruptcy in 1984, and I then entered practice as a self-employed consultant. While I viewed myself as self-employed, Pat thought that I was more or less unemployed. With the exception of work on a few small contracts and teaching an evening course in introductory business statistics at the University of Maryland, I spent most of the time during 1984-1985 in the Towson (Maryland) Public Library conducting data analyses on a hand-held calculator and writing papers on validity generalization/meta-analysis. In spring of 1985, I landed a job at New York University's School of Business and we moved to Manhattan.

Spring of 1986 brought much joy to Pat and I as our first-born, Kathleen, arrived. Also, three of the papers that I had worked on at the Towson Public Library surprisingly appeared in the same issue of the *Journal of Applied Psychology* in spring of 1986 – a reputational boost that would, in part, lead to an early, positive tenure decision at NYU. At NYU, I taught in the undergraduate, MBA, and doctoral programs with the doctoral research methods course being my favorite course. I enjoyed much success at NYU and, moreover, had the opportunity to start work and become friends with an exceptional junior faculty cohort. The doctoral students and faculty at NYU were a pleasure to work with, and I continued collaborations with several of these individuals for a number of years after leaving NYU.

Our second daughter, Maura, was born in 1988. By 1990, our two-bedroom apartment in Manhattan had become too small for a family of four, so we looked to move to the suburbs. Coincidentally, Tulane University had contacted me at the time about a joint appointment in Psychology and Business. The position was attractive and we were also expecting our third child, which led to a decision to take the Tulane job. Our third daughter, Kerry, was born in fall 1990, shortly before our move in 1991 to New Orleans and Tulane.

At Tulane, I became director of the Industrial-Organizational Psychology Program, a position that I would hold until 2001 when I moved across campus for a full-time position in the Freeman School of Business. During my years in the Department of Psychology, I worked with many superb graduate students, several of whom have gone on to serve in leadership roles within SIOP including my first PhD student at Tulane, Lisa Finkelstein. In my early years at Tulane, I also had the good fortune of working with many outstanding scholars in Psychology and within the Organizational Behavior (OB) Area of the business school. At the time, the I-O Psychology Program at Tulane was offered jointly with the Organizational Behavior Doctoral Program in the School of Business. Together, we trained scores of graduate students within our domestic and Latin American PhD programs, many of whom have had very successful careers in academia and practice within the U.S. and in a host of foreign countries. Unfortunately, in 2005 the I-O Psychology Program was discontinued in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the declaration of financial exigency at Tulane. My fondest memories of my years in the Psychology Department were working with Bill Dunlap. Bill was a giant in the world of applied statistics and a good friend.

My strong interests in meta-analysis began to shift somewhat during my time at Tulane, initially to a focus on the meaning of employee perceptions of work environment characteristics (psychological and organizational climate) and then to the development of a research program on learning and the efficacy of workplace safety and health interventions. My interest in workplace safety began in 1994 as I became a co-investigator on the Tulane University HAMMER (Hazardous Materials Management and Emergency Response) Project, a joint project with the U.S. Department of Energy and its contractors. The focus of the HAMMER Project, centered at the Hanford Site in Washington State, was to optimally develop and critically evaluate hands-on training for workers in a variety of occupations who would be involved in cleaning up nuclear waste at the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War, nine nuclear reactors and five plutonium-finishing plants at Hanford produced most of the weapons grade plutonium for the U.S.'s nuclear arsenal. Today, Hanford is the most contaminated nuclear site in the U.S. Our work on the HAMMER Project at Hanford is documented in numerous technical reports and publications.

After leaving the HAMMER Project, I continued research and practice on workplace safety issues including becoming an ad hoc member (from 2003 to 2006) of the Safety and Occupational Health Study Section of the National Institute for Occupational Safety (NIOSH) and serving in an advisory capacity to NIOSH. In 2006, Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt appointed me to a three-year term as a member of NIOSH's Safety and Occupation Health Study Section. Serving as a member of the Study Section was challenging, yet I learned a considerable amount about workplace health and safety from colleagues in engineering, biostatistics, occupational medicine, and the various disciplines within public health. Also, in October of 2006, I was awarded the Decade of Behavior Research Award for research that has had an impact on workplace and public safety from a federation of behavioral,

social science, and public health associations. This award was presented during a U.S. Congressional Briefing entitled “Workplace and Public Safety: The Role of Behavioral Research.” While this award was given to me as an individual, the award reflected the exceptional contributions of my graduate students and colleagues who worked with me for over a decade on workplace safety projects including Kamal Birdi, Harold Bowers, Suzanne Chan-Serafin, Robin Cohen, David Holman, Gazi Islam, Ron Landis, Rommel (Bombie) Salvador, Sue Ann Sarpy, Kristin Smith-Crowe, Paul Tesluk, and Joel Vaslow. Since 2006, I have had the opportunity of working with numerous additional graduate students and colleagues on workplace safety projects as well as projects in two other areas of interest: the development of statistical procedures for assessing within-group interrater agreement and the development of the staff ride as a qualitative research methodology.

Over my career, I have served in numerous professional service roles. Several of my more memorable roles were serving as President of SIOP in 2003-2004 and Editor of *Personnel Psychology* from 2007-2010. In these roles, I learned a great deal about the intellect, commitment, and collegiality of members of our profession and the staff that runs the SIOP administrative office. We are truly blessed to be part of a discipline and profession populated by such individuals and professionals, a point that I am continually reminded of as I attend and participate in our annual conference.

For the 2004 Chicago conference, I placed, both in terms of my presidential address (entitled Making the World Safer: The Role of I-O Psychology) and in the conference programming, an explicit focus on workplace and public safety. The aim of these sessions was to begin to discuss the opportunities for I-O psychologists in promoting public safety, guarding against terrorism, improving emergency response, and promoting workplace safety and worker health. While I do not know if those discussions contributed in any way to the emphasis placed on workplace safety issues in subsequent conferences, I am nevertheless very pleased to see the ever-expanding involvement of our members in this general area of inquiry and practice.

During my presidential term, I worked with a superb group of SIOP officers, committee chairs, committee members, and volunteers. Several of the highlights were the development and delivery of workshops with faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities to promote the inclusion of I-O psychology in their undergraduate coursework, the approval and publication of the 4th Edition of the *Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures*, and the expansion of joint conference programming with the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EWAOP) at the SIOP Conference and EAWOP Congress (a continuation of efforts that Jim Farr and I had begun six years earlier). My most memorable team effort as my presidential period came to a close (Past-President 2004-2005) was chairing the task force in 2005 charged with developing the SIOP journal concept. After receiving broad input, this concept, envisioned as exchanges within and between academics and practitioners on focal topics that also incorporated an international perspective, was approved and has become the

official publication of SIOP: *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*.

As I conclude this biography in the summer of 2013, my daughter Maura has just completed her masters work in I-O psychology and will continue as a doctoral student at IIT in the fall. Pat and I are extremely proud of her and our other daughters. Kerry earned an undergraduate degree in business from Tulane University, majoring in finance, and she is now working in Chicago as a forecast analyst. Kathleen earned her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Northwestern University and is working at a hospital in Washington, D.C. Margaret, our fourth daughter, was born in 1996. She is entering her senior year of high school, looking forward to another run at the state volleyball championship and applying to college. Pat will continue employment as a school social worker in Louisiana. I am completing my term as Chair of Tulane's Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board this summer and resuming my responsibilities as the Lawrence Martin Chair in Business.

August 2013.