The 2011-2013 Oscar Kaplan Postdoctoral Fellowship Presentation

Nathen J. Murawski, Ph.D.  
San Diego State University  
Oscar Kaplan Postdoctoral Fellow

Monday, June 9, 2014, 1:30PM  
North Life Sciences Building  
Room 101  
San Diego State University

Dr. Nathen J. Murawski is the fifth recipient of San Diego State University’s Oscar Kaplan Postdoctoral Fellowship in Developmental Issues. His recent work has focused on the detrimental effects of alcohol exposure during early development on brain and behavior using a model of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). There is a significant need to develop safe and effective treatments to improve cognitive outcomes in FASD. Dr. Murawski will present his work examining the effectiveness of supplemental choline at mitigating behavioral impairments and associated changes in the brain using a model of FASD. His findings highlight a number of factors that contribute to the effectiveness of choline supplementation, including sex, age, and the timing of choline supplementation.

Dr. Murawski received his undergraduate degree in psychology, graduating with honors from California State University, Sacramento. He received his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Delaware with a concentration in behavioral neuroscience. His research in developmental behavioral neuroscience has examined both the ontogeny of learning and memory, and such developmental disorders affecting cognition, as Autism and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. In addition to continuing this line of research, Dr. Murawski has also taught a graduate seminar in physiology and behavior at SDSU. Outside of lab, Nathen has a deep interest in classical literature and is currently training for his second triathlon.

Oscar Kaplan, Ph.D.  
Emeritus Professor

In Remembrance  
and with Thanks

Oscar Kaplan was the architect of the Psychology Department at SDSU. He had already acquired an international reputation when hired in 1946. Promoted to Associate Professor in 1949, he served as chair from 1950 to 1952 and was promoted to Professor in 1952. He insisted that we hire active researchers. Oscar served as chair again from 1963 to 1966 and hired 16 faculty members in that span. In 1994, he observed, “This department could have gone one of two ways [in 1963]. It could have gone...toward pure teaching [but] the department that I was trying to build was not going to be a junior college department... After I hired those 16 people, the battle was over.” Indeed, our department has continued to follow the plan that Oscar drafted. Ours is a department of very active and well-funded researchers—a department of teaching scholars.

Prior to her death, Oscar’s widow, Rose, and their sons David, Robert and Steve, established a trust to fund our Oscar Kaplan Postdoctoral Fellowship in Developmental Issues. This event celebrates Oscar’s legacy, the accomplishments of the Kaplan Fellows, and our appreciation of the Kaplan family’s support of our department—the one that Oscar designed.