A Celebration of Life: Remembering the Magic of Tim Baldwin

*Abstract*

We invite you to attend this session in which we will celebrate the life of longtime member and champion of (M)OBTS, Tim Baldwin. During Tim’s over 35 years in the society, he touched many lives with his literal and figurative magic. Because Tim unexpected and tragically passed away on October 10, 2022, and many of us were unable to attend services for him, we offer this session as a time of remembering by those touched by him. Come prepared to share stories, laugh, and cry with us. Tissues will be available in plenty.

Keywords: *Tim Baldwin*, *Celebration of Life*, *In Memoriam*

**Introduction**

Tim Baldwin gave his first presentation at the annual meeting of the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society (OBTS) in 1987 on using magic (illusionism) to enrich organizational behavior (OB) courses. Over the 35 years that followed, Tim went on to give 20 or so other (M)OBTS presentations and touched many lives with his interpersonal magic in the process. Indeed, Tim’s way of endearing himself to colleagues and students with his overall jovialness and relentlessly positive attitude as well as generosity with his time and money could best be described as magical. Tim made what would be his final MOBTS presentation (Quijada et al, 2022)—the sixth iteration of his and his co-presenters’ series on using video clips to illustrate management practices and principles in the classroom—this past June. Because he tragically and prematurely passed away on October 10, 2022 and many of us were unable to attend services for him in his hometown, the purpose of this session is to serve as a time of remembering and sharing for members of MOTBS who were touched by Tim’s figurative and literal magic.

**Foundations and Implications**

The grieving process needs space and time to occur (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). Many of us did not have the opportunity to mourn with others following Tim’s death so creating this opportunity is important. The goal of our session, therefore, is to provide Tim’s colleagues and friends an opportunity to grieve him collectively (Bergin, 2016). Given that we all grieve differently (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005), this will be an opportunity for participants to do so in their own ways in a safe and supportive environment.

Nevertheless, a key part of the grieving process is to take time to think about the role the person fulfilled and honor their place in our lives (Ure, n.d.). Though we want to acknowledge and honor Tim’s formal contributions to scholarship and the academic community, including (M)OBTS, we more importantly want to highlight the actions and interactions that made him so special to many of us. We believe that various aspects of Tim continue to live on in those of us he has touched and want to explore and share those aspects with each other.

**Background/Biography**

Tim was born, Timothy Todd Baldwin, in Quincy, Michigan, to his parents, Peter and Nancy, on May 9, 1958. After graduating high school, Tim went on to earn his bachelor’s, MBA, and Ph.D. all from Michigan State University. He also married his sweetheart JoEllen with whom he raised a son, Matthew. Tim spent his entire academic career of over 35 years at Indiana University (Vlahakis, 2022). Sadly, his life also ended there on October 10, 2022. He was jovial, relentless, positive, a great friend, one who uplifts others, generous to a fault, and highly accomplished. While Tim’s impact on the Academy is outstanding, we think that where he really shined was in his teaching, collaborative, and encouraging spirit. He truly, deeply, cared deeply about others and thus about being an effective teacher. Though he loved his wife and son most of all, his ways of caring for his students and colleagues was unparalleled, and is why and how he will be most missed in our community

Specifically, Tim was a generous and warm and welcoming friend to all he met, regularly inviting us/them to push our/themselves and achieve our/their fullest potential. It is said people live through the effects they have had on other people. His openness and generosity will be something we will try to emulate to continue his mission and to continue to help create the world he wanted to see. In this way, Tim will go on to live through us and many others.

**Brief Summary of Tim’s Research Accomplishments**

During his time Tim authored over 50 journal articles and book chapters, along with several books and textbooks. According to Google Scholar, Tim has over 17,000 citations of his work with 6,000 coming in just the last five years.

Tim’s primary area of research stream was in Human Resource Management and, more specifically, the transfer of training. He recognized the significant impact that his research could have in this area as organizations spend billions of dollars in training without a clear measure of whether the training was effective or not. In his seminal paper (Baldwin and Ford, 1988), he and his coauthor reviewed the field and created a model that has supported all the research that has come afterwards. In this paper, he and Ford also provided a clear definition of transfer of training and a model that outlines three factors—(1) trainee characteristics (e.g., ability, personality), (2) training design (e.g., sequencing, content) and (3) work environment (e.g., support, opportunity to use)—which influence learning and retention and then in turn how learning and retention, along with trainee characteristics and work environment affect the actual generalization and maintenance of the training.

More recently, Tim coauthored a meta-analysis (Blume, et. Al, 2010) to identify the most robust findings in extant transfer-of-training research. This work points to key future areas of research and presents important insights for practice based on what we now know of transfer of training. This paper takes a look at what has happened from when the previous paper was published and analyzed which areas of the model have been explored and what needs to be done to make the field as rigorous as possible. The paper concludes by looking at what the implication of these insights are for practice and points out that there is not one single element that should be worked on, but that it is a complex relationship involving many elements to each of which attention should be paid.

Two of Tim’s recent publications also deserve mention. In the most recent (Walter et al., 2021), Tim and his coauthors expose significant racial bias in the recoding of misconduct. They then raise the alarm on research using archival data on organizational misconduct that does not take this bias into account. In the other, Marx et al. (2015), Tim and his colleagues address the dearth of teaching preparation in business-school doctoral programs. The paper looks at what is out there and identifies four different successful interventions and invites all of us to take on the challenge of improving the preparation of our doctoral students.

**Other Accolades**

Tim received multiple teaching awards for his instruction at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In particular, he received the Eli Lilly Alumni Teaching Award, the FACET All-University Teaching Award and the Dow Innovation in Teaching Fellowship (Vlahakis, 2022).

For the past 8 years, he contributed to the spirit of collaboration at (M)OBTC through a regular session in which he and his co-presenters introduced and shared video clips from Tim’s repository. Tim set up the repository to be open to all, that is, so all members could draw from and contribute to it. This repository will continue and will be added to every year.

**Session Overview**

This session will have four parts. The first author will open with a brief statement to clarify the circumstances around Tim’s death. Media coverage of his passing caused a lot of confusion and left questions unanswered for many. Through a relationship with Tim’s family, the first author has been given the details and permission from JoEllen (Tim’s widow) to set the record straight. Next, the second author will summarize Tim’s accomplishments. Then, we will invite and open the floor to participants to share about Tim and how he touched their lives. Finally, the first author will thank everyone for being there and make a closing comment to conclude the session.

**Structure of the Session**

We are requesting a 60-minute roundtable discussion format, though we are also open to any alternatives conference planners would propose.

The following outlines the approximate time allocations for each portion of the session:

1. 0 – 10 Opening comments and Q&A (1st author)
2. 10 – 20 Summary of Tim’s academic accomplishments (2nd author)
3. 20 – 55 Open time for remembering and sharing (Participants)
4. 55 – 60 Closing comments (1st author)

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