



Professor Edwin D. Lawson



# Edwin D. Lawson—Scholar and Gentleman

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Edwin David Lawson was born in Chicago on December 23, 1923, the son of Abraham and Anna Cooper Levin. In 1951, Ed changed his surname from Levin to Lawson, taking the advice of his academic advisor that, given the attitudes of the time, his Jewish surname might limit his academic career.

When Abraham Levin died in Chicago in 1931, Anna moved the family to Boston, her home city, and Ed attended the public schools. He graduated from Boston Latin School in 1942 and enrolled that year in the University of Illinois, Champaign. World War II was in its first year, and, at the age of 19, Ed joined the Army Reserves. At the end of his freshman year he went on active duty with the Army Air Force, trained as a gunner, and was assigned to B-29 school. In November 1944 his unit, part of the 20th Air Force, went to Saipan, in the Marianas Islands, and began the first bombing runs to mainland Japan since General Jimmy Doolittle's raids. He flew thirty-five missions, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and a Purple Heart.

One of Ed's barracks mates was John Ciardi, who would later become famous as a poet and literary critic. In *Saipan*, his posthumously published diary, Ciardi mentions (November 26, 1944) his discussions with "Levin, [who] I discover, is a philosopher—Freshman year. . . . The discussions stayed wild. Levin's all right. It's myself I'm not sure of. I seem to have a grudge against the motivating force of all philosophy—which seems to reduce everything to a single explanation" (1988, 22). In a later entry (January 5, 1945), Ciardi writes, "A couple of nights ago Levin was on airplane guard when a dive bomber broke through and dropped a buzz bomb (rocket bomb) on the runway. . . . Levin caught a splinter in his heel, luckily just low enough to miss the joint. It did sever a tendon but the report is it can be healed." Ed was in the hospital

as a result and his crew took off on a raid without him. They did not return (1988, 81).

Ed was discharged in 1946 and returned to the University of Illinois, receiving an A. B. in psychology in 1948. He continued his education there, with an A. M. in 1949, also in psychology; his thesis, *Some Comparisons of Group Performances of Men and Women*, was directed by Raymond B. Cattell. Ed immediately began work on a Ph.D., finishing the degree in 1954. His dissertation was *The Relationship of Change in Attitudes to an Index of Autonomic Disturbance*, directed by Ross Stagner.

Meanwhile, Ed met another psychology student at Illinois, a young woman from Winnipeg, Manitoba, named Irene Kentner. They were married in 1949. They are the parents of three sons—Douglas (deceased), Robert, and David—and they have a grandson and a granddaughter.

Ed's first academic position was at the State University of New York at Albany, where in 1954 he was appointed assistant professor of psychology. He remained there until 1963, and during that time he also did research for the New York State Department of Health and was an abstractor for *Psychological Abstracts*. In 1958, he was certified in New York State as a psychologist. In 1963 he went to Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, as professor of psychology and head of the department. While there he started writing short reviews for *Choice*, which he continued until 2000. In 1966 he moved across the continent to California as professor and head at Stanislaus State College in Turlock. While there he received California certification as a psychologist. In 1967 he returned to New York state, where he remained in the Psychology Department at the State University of New York College at Fredonia until he became professor emeritus in 1989.

While Ed was a graduate student at the University of Illinois, he was influenced by Charles E. Osgood, who developed the Semantic Differential, a device to measure the connotative meaning of concepts by asking respondents to choose a position on a scale between two opposing words, such as "excellent-poor," "powerful-weak," "kind-cruel," and so forth. This concept blends psychology and linguistics, and while Ed's first publications were based on the semantic differential, they were not onomastic. The analysis of names through this technique, however, was a natural progression, though a bit indirect. The director of the computer center at Fredonia mentioned that the center had a programmer but she had nothing to program. Ed thought of several possibilities and realized

that names might be analyzable with the techniques he had been using for other group perceptions (Lawson 2001, 231). He chose men's first names, and the result was an article in the *Journal of Psychology* in 1971. This article caught the eye of *Names* editor Kelsie Harder, who wrote to Ed about the American Name Society, which he joined, and the majority of his onomastics research has since been published in this journal.

Kelsie encouraged Ed to submit articles, review books, and referee manuscripts. He also suggested that Ed guest edit a special issue devoted to the contributions of the social sciences to the study of names. That issue appeared in 1983, with contributions mostly from psychologists and sociologists.

While evaluating manuscripts, Ed noticed that scholars were often unaware of relevant studies, because there had been no published bibliography for over thirty years, since Elsdon Smith's *Personal Names* in 1952. To correct this deficiency, he began systematically compiling and annotating articles on personal names. His first list was published in two parts in *Names* in 1984 and 1986. In 1987 he published *Personal Names and Naming: An Annotated Bibliography*. A second volume, *More Names and Naming*, appeared in 1995. He has since brought his collections up to date with an extensive bibliography in the 2003 issue of *Onoma*, the journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS), and he has also published specialized bibliographies, such as those on nicknames in 1990 and on Jewish names in 1997.

For a long time Ed has had a special interest in names in Israel and neighboring countries. He has visited Israel a number of times, doing research in 1981, 1987, and in the early 1990s. His interest extended to the West Bank during those later years. In 1981 he was a Fulbright Scholar at Yarmouk University in Jordan. In 2003, the Center for the Study of Jewish Onomastics at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, honored him for his contributions with a special edition of *These Are The Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics* (Demskey 2003). The issue was timed to recognize Ed on his 80th birthday.

Ed has a special concern for scholarship at an international level; he has fostered and supported a number of academics from non-Western countries, including Russia, China, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, Portugal, West Bank, and, most recently, Azerbaijan; and he has been responsible for bringing to the attention of names researchers everywhere the existence of onomastics journals from around the world.

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Preliminary research led to an article in 1992; and in 1993, at the Eighteenth Congress of ICOS, he organized a panel of journal editors to discuss common issues. It was felt to be so successful that similar panels have continued at subsequent meetings of ICOS. His report appeared in *Onoma* in 1997.

One of Ed's most significant contributions to onomastics has been his leadership role in the American Name Society. I first became aware of his influence when I was chosen to be the editor of *Names* in 1988. His advice, as well as his contributions of articles and reviews, were enormously helpful to me, a relative newcomer to onomastics, and his broad knowledge and understanding helped me to move the journal toward a more international focus. Largely due to his influence, the constitution of ANS was changed to give the president a two-year rather than a one-year term. He was the second two-year president, assuming office at a time that the Society was in trouble financially and organizationally. In the words of Ed Callary, "Lawson took up the reins and, when he left office at the end of 1996, ANS was financially stable, the journal was current and appeared on time, and, probably of greatest importance, the Society had a vision for its members and for onomastics" (2003, 22), including making onomastics more professional and more respected as a discipline, developing resources for the study of names, and encouraging research in previously under-researched areas.

For nearly forty years Edwin D. Lawson has been a leading member of the American Name Society—as scholar, advisor, officer, and friend. It is most fitting and proper that the Society honor him with this special issue of *Names*.

#### References

- Callary, Edward. 2003. "Ed Lawson's Contributions to Onomastics." In Demsky (2003). Pp. 21-24.
- Ciardi, John. 1988. *Saipan: The War Diary of John Ciardi*. Fayetteville: Univ. of Arkansas P.
- Demsky, Aaron, ed. 2003. *These Are The Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics 4*. Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan Univ. P.
- Lawson, Edwin D. 2001. "Memories." *Names* 49: 231-35.
- Smith, Elsdon C. 1952. *Personal Names: A Bibliography*. New York: New York Public Library.

Edwin Lawson's Onomastic Publications

The list of publications that follows provides some idea of the extent to which Ed has contributed to the study of names. It is limited to onomastics and thus gives only a partial view of his contribution to scholarship. Omitted are the many articles and reviews of interest primarily to psychologists, mostly early in his career.

1971

"Semantic Differential Analysis of Men's First Names." *Journal of Psychology* 78: 229-40.

1973

"Men's First Names, Nicknames, and Short Names: A Semantic Differential Analysis." *Names* 21: 22-27.

1974

"Women's First Names: A Semantic Differential Analysis." *Names* 22: 52-58.

1980

"First Names on the Campus: A Semantic Differential Analysis." *Names* 28: 69-83.

1981

Translator (with Batsheva Taube) of "Names' Survey in the Population Administration: State of Israel," by Nissim Eliassaf. *Names* 29: 273-84.

1983

"B-29 Bomber Names in the Pacific: Gravel Gertie, the Ancient Mariner, and Four Roses." *Literary Onomastics Studies* 10: 161-66.

"Social Science Contributions to Names." Editor, special issue. *Names* 31: 235-36.

1984

"Personal Names: 100 Years of Social Science Contributions." *Names* 32: 45-73.

1985

"Psychological Dimensions of Men's Names: A Semantic Differential Analysis." In Ernst Eichler, et. al, *Der Eigename in Sprache und Gesellschaft [Names in Language and Society]: Proceedings of the XVth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*. Pp. 143-48. Leipzig: Karl Marx University. (microfiche).

"North American College and University Sports Nicknames" (with Valerie A. Phillips). *Onomastica Canadiana* 67: 2-16. Also ERIC: ED 266-490.

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1986.

"Personal Names: 100 Years of Social Science Contributions (Concluded)." *Names* 34: 89-90.

"Women's Full First Names, Short Names, and Affectionate Names: A Semantic Differential Analysis" (with Lynn M. Roeder). *Names* 34: 175-84.

1987

*Personal Names and Naming: An Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood P.

1989

"Personal Names and Naming: A New Annotated Bibliography." *Journal of the North Central Name Society*. (Winter): 43-61.

"Social Psychological Aspects of Personal Naming." ERIC: ED 298 570. Paper read at Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland, March 1988.

"Palestinian First Names: An Introduction" (With Hanna Y. Tushyeh and George Rishmawi). *Names* 37: 245-64.

1990

"Nicknames: An Annotated Bibliography." *Names* 38: 323-63.

"In Memoriam: Thomas Valentine Busse." *Names* 38: 364.

"For Editors, Authors, and Readers: What We Need to Do to Improve Our Journals." *Proceedings of the XVIIth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*. Helsinki. Pp. 95-102.

1991

"Most Common Jewish First Names in Israel." *Names* 39: 103-24.

"Psychological Dimensions of Women's Names: A Semantic Differential Analysis." Fredonia, NY: State University College. Also ERIC: ED 343 409. Summary in *Research in Education* (August 1992).

1992

"Onomastics Journals: How Many and Where?" *Serials Librarian* 21: 99-138.

"Psychological Dimensions of Women's Names: A Semantic Differential Analysis." *Namenkundliche Informationen* 61/62: 35-71. Also ERIC: ED 343 409.

"Most Common Surnames in Israel: Arabic and Jewish—Part I" (with Charles Kormos and Ben Brit. *Onomastica Canadiana* 74: 23-38.

"Most Common Surnames in Israel: Arabic and Jewish—Part II." (with Charles Kormos and Ben Brit). *Onomastica Canadiana* 74: 75-92.



1994

"Naming Patterns of Recent Russian Immigrants to Israel from Central Asian Republics (with Irina Glushkovskaya)." *Proceedings, World Congress of Jewish Studies, 1993*. Division D II (1994). Pp. 175-82. Also ERIC: ED 368 189.

"Naming Patterns of Recent Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union to Israel" (with Irina Glushkovskaya). *Names* 42: 157-80. Also ERIC ED 368 189 (with tables).

1995

*More Names and Naming: An Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood P.

1996

"Personal Name Stereotypes." In Heinrich Löffler, and Ladislav Zgusta, eds., *Namenforschung, Proper Name Studies, Les Noms Propres*. Pp. 1744-47.

"The Onomastic Treasures of the CIA." *Names* 44: 154-64. Also ERIC: ED 393 315 (with complete appendix).

1997

"Directory of Onomastic Journals." *Onoma* 33: 222-35.

"New Horizons for the American Name Society." *Names* 45: 152-56.

"Name Changes of Soviet Jewish Immigrants to Israel" (with Irina Glushkovskaya). *Namenkundliche Informationen* 70: 9-25.

"Some Jewish Personal Names: An Annotated Bibliography." In Aaron Demsky, et. al, eds., *These Are the Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics*. Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan Univ. P. Pp. 83-149.

1998

"Latvian Naming Patterns, 1880-1991" (with Laimute Balode). *Proceedings of the 19th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*, Aberdeen, Scotland, 1996. Pp. 244-49. Also ERIC: ED 424 771.

1999

"Lithuanian Patriotic Names, 1878-1991" (with Alvydas Butkus). *Onoma* 34: 249-63.

"Naming Patterns of Recent Immigrants from Former Soviet Georgia to Israel" (with Irina Glushkovskaya). In Demsky, Aaron, ed., *These Are The Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics 2*. Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan Univ. P. Pp. 137-57.

"Naming Patterns of Recent Russian Immigrants to Israel" (with Irina Glushkovskaya). *Akten Des 18. Internationalen Kongresses Für Namenforschung, Trier, 1993*, Vol. 3 (Namensoziologie). Pp. 150-65.

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2000

"Ricordo Di Frank Rodway Hamlin (1935-2000)." *Rivista Italiana di Onomastica* 6: 655.

2001

"Memories." *Names* 49: 17-21.

2002

"Jacob and His Sons: Their Impact on Hebrew and Jewish Onomastics." *Onomata* 16: 247-53.

"Donald M. Lance, 1931-2002." *Newsletter, Dictionary Society of North America* 26: 2.

"Generation Names in China: Past Present, and Future" (with Li Zhonghua). *Names*: 50: 163-72.

2003

"Some Jewish Personal Names—2: An Annotated Bibliography." In Aaron Demsky, ed., *These Are The Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics* 4. Pp. 175-335.

"In Memoriam: Donald M. Lance." *Names* 51: 59-60.

"Research on Personal Names in North America, 1990-2003: An Annotated Bibliography." *Onoma* 38: 87-118.

2004

"Religious, Patriotic, Ethnic Factors and Names." In Ana Isabel Boullón Agrelo, ed., *Novi Te Ex Nomine: Estudos Filolóxos Ofrecidos ao Prof. Dr. Dieter Kremer*. La Coruña, Spain: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza. Pp. 203-12.

2005

"Russian Given Names: Their Pronunciation, Meaning, and Frequency" (with Natan Nevo). *Names* 53: 49-76. (Corrected copy at <http://www.wtsn.binghamton.edu/ANS/>.)

In Press as of October 2007:

"Russian Naming Patterns, 1874-1990" (with Irene Glushkovskaya and Richard F. Sheil). *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*. Uppsala, 2002. Pp. 19-24.

"The Mountain (Gorskij) Jews of Azerbaijan—Their 20th Century Naming Patterns" (with Farid Alakbarli and R. F. Sheil. In Aaron Demsky, ed., *These Are the Names: Studies in Jewish Onomastics*. Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan Univ. P.

Selected Reviews of Onomastic Publications:

1985

*Biblical Proper Names (A Symbolic Interpretation)*. By David Mendel Harduf. *Names* 33: 186-87.

*Bulgarska Transkripcija Anglijski Imena [Bulgarian Transcription of English Names]*. By Andrei Danchev. *Names* 33: 273-74.

*What's in a Nickname? Exploring the Jungle of College Athletic Mascots*. By Ray Franks. *Names* 33: 276-77.

*The Professor's Book of First Names*. By Thomas V. Busse. *Names* 33: 279-80.

*What's in a Name? An Essay in the Psychology of Reference*. By John M. Carroll. *Names* 34: 387-91.

1986

*The Facts on File Dictionary of First Names*. By Leslie Dunkling and William Gosling. *Verbatim* 13: 16-17.

1987

*Namer by Salinon*. By The Salinon Corporation. *Names* 35: 116-19.

1989

*Personal and Family Names: A Popular Monograph on the Origin and History of the Present and Former Time*. By Harry Alfred Long. *Names* 37: 93-94.

*Eponyms in Psychology: A Dictionary and Biographical Sourcebook*. By Leonard Zusne. *Names* 37: 187-89.

*The Many Names of Country People: An Historical Dictionary from the Twelfth Century Onward*. By John T. Schlebecker. *Names* 37: 292-94.

*Baby Name Countdown: Popularity and Meanings of Today's Baby Names*. Ed. Janet Schwegel. *Names* 37: 299-302.

*Street People*. By Helga Dudman. *Names* 37: 384-85.

*Naming Ourselves, Naming Our Children: Resolving the Last Name Dilemma*. By Sharon Lebell. *Names* 37: 391-92.

1990

*Dictionary of Pseudonyms and Their Origins*. By Adrian Room. *Names* 38: 246-47.

1991

*Medical Literature and Eponyms: An Encyclopedia of Medical Terms Derived from Literary Characters*. By Alvin E. Rodin and Jack D. Key. *Names* 39: 62-63.

*A Century of Population Growth: From the First Census of the United States to the Twelfth, 1790-1900*. By United States Bureau of the Census. *Names* 39: 63-65.

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- German-American Names*. By George F. Jones. *Names* 39: 135-37.
- Childlight: Parenting for the New Age*. By Hilarion; *The Worst Name Baby Book*. By Bob Glickman; *Baby Names: Over 4000 Beautiful Indian Names for Your Child*. By Vimla Patel; *The Hawaiian Name Book: Hawaiian Translation*. By Patrick Ka'ano'i and Robert Lokomaika'iokalani Snakenberg; and *The Complete Book of Hebrew Baby Names*. By Smadar Shir Sidi. *Names* 39: 285-89.
- Jablonski's Dictionary of Syndromes and Eponymic Diseases*, 2nd ed. By Stanley Jablonski. *Onomastica Canadiana* 73: 78-80.
- In Which County? Nova Scotia Surnames from Birth Registers, 1864 to 1877*. By Terence M. Punch; *The Soundex Reference Guide*. By Bradley W. Steuart. *Names* 39: 289-92.
- How to Change Your Name in Florida: With Forms*. By Mark Warda; *Ohio Name Change*. By LawPak; *Change Your Name Legally in Massachusetts*. By Timothy Scott. *Names* 39: 292-94.

1992

- Can You Name That Team? A Guide to Professional Baseball, Football, Soccer, Hockey, and Basketball Teams*. By David B. Biesel. *Names* 40: 138-39.
- Baby Names for the '90s*. By Barbara Kay Turner. *Journal of the North Central Name Society* (Spring). Pp. 34-36.

1993

- The Book of African Names*. By Molefi Kete Asante; *What's in a Name? Unaitwaje? A Book of Swahili Names*. By Sharifa M. Zawawi; *African Names: Names from the African Continent for Children and Adults*. By Julia Stewart. *Names* 41: 128-31.
- Jewish Personal Names: Their Origin, Derivation and Diminutive Forms*. By Shmuel Gorr, (ed. Chaim Freedman); *Jewish Family Names and Their Origins: An Etymological Dictionary*. By Heinrich Guggenheimer and Eva H. Guggenheimer; *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire*. By Alexander Beider. *Onomastica Canadiana* 75: 94-98.

1997

- Joodse Voornamen in Amsterdam: Een Inventarisatie van Asjkenazische en Bijbehorende Burgerlijke Voornamen tussen 1660 en 1850* [*Jewish First Names in Amsterdam: An Inventory of Asjkenazi and Matching Civil First Names between 1669 and 1850*]. By Jits van Straten and Harmen Snel. *Names* 45: 217:19.

1998

- A Dictionary of Muslim Names*. By Radwan Hakim. *Names* 46: 71.
- Jewish Family Names and their Origins: An Etymological Dictionary*. By Heinrich W. Guggenheimer and Eva H. Guggenheimer; *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire*. By Alexander Beider; *A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland*. By Alexander Beider; *Jewish Names from Prague (15-18th Centuries)*. By Alexander Beider. *Names* 46: 133-38.
- The Cognitive Psychology of Proper Names*. By Tim Valentine, Tim Brennen, and Serge Brédart. *Studia Anthroponymica Scandinavica* 16: 136-37.

2000

- Polish First Names*. By Sophie Hodorowicz Knab. *Names* 48: 138.

2001

- The Sweetest Sound*. By Alan Berliner. *Onomastica Canadiana* 83: 39-40.

- Jewish First Names*. By David C. Gross. *Names* 49: 36.

2002

- Names and Social Structure: Examples from Southeast Europe*. Ed. Paul H. Stahl. *Names* 50: 77-79.

2003

- Selected Bibliography of the Onomastics of the Uralian Languages*. Ed. István Hoffmann. *Names* 51: 243-47.
- Personal Names Studies of Medieval Europe: Social Identity and Familial Structures*. Ed. George T. Beech, Monique Bourin, and Pascal Chareille. *Names* 51: 247-53.

2004

- A Dictionary of Askenazic Given Names: Their Origins, Structure, Pronunciation, and Migrations*. By Alexander Beider. *Names* 52: 53-59.
- Dictionary of American Family Names*. Ed. Patrick Hanks. *Names* 52: 61-65.

2005

- A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from Galicia*. By Alexander Beider. *Names* 53: 315-21.
- A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames*. By Lars Menk. *Names* 53: 322-28.

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In addition to these many publications, Edwin Lawson has made presentations at numerous conferences and has written many short reviews for *Choice*. Notable also are the websites he has developed and which may be accessed at <http://edwinlawson.com>:

Jewish Language Research Website: <http://www.jewish-languages.org/onomastics.html>

Pronunciation and Meaning of Russian Names: <http://www.fredonia.edu/faculty/emeritus/edwinlawson/RussianNames/index.html>

Pronunciation and Meaning of Azeri Names: <http://www.fredonia.edu/faculty/emeritus/edwinlawson/azerinames/index.html>

The Magic World of Names: <http://www.fredonia.edu/faculty/emeritus/edwinlawson/worldofnames/index.html>

Religious, Patriotic, and Ethnic Factors Involved with Names and Naming in Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Azerbaijan: <http://www.fredonia.edu/faculty/emeritus/edwinlawson/namefactors/index.html>