



In Memoriam: Herbert Barry III

(1930–2025)

I.M. Nick

Germanic Society for Forensic Linguistics, GERMANY

On June 2, 1930, Herbert Barry III was born in New York. By the age of 22, he had already earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social Relations from Harvard, the alma mater of his grandfather, father, and three uncles.¹ By 1957, the MENSA member graduated with a Master of Science and Doctorate in Experimental Psychology from Yale University. The Ivy-League graduate very quickly found employment and was invited to become a faculty member of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Pharmacy. During his nearly five-decade tenure, there, he published prolifically. Within experimental psychology, his research centered on exploring the effects of psychopharmaceuticals. Just one example of his pioneering work is *Actions of Alcohol*, a two-volume reference devoted to the wide-reaching documented effects of alcohol consumption on the human body. In 1971, a review of the nearly 1,000-page reference was featured in *Science* magazine. Doctors Travis Thompson and Richard A. Meisch, the scientific experts evaluating the reference, lauded the publication, stating that the work was a "welcome and long overdue addition to the scientific literature" (64). Thanks to this and other publications in the field, Professor Barry was bestowed a Distinguished Scientist Award from the Society for Stimulus Properties of Drugs (SSPD), a scholarly organization dedicated to investigating the discriminative stimulus effects of drugs (Overton, Rosecrans, and Barry 1999; Antelman et al. 1991). In recognition of his scholarship, Professor Barry was also given the Research Scientist Development Award by the National Institute of Mental Health. In 2023, he was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, which was given to him by the Psychohistory Forum for his record of scholarly excellence in Psychology. However, Professor Barry's scientific achievements were by no means limited to psycho-pharmaceutical research.

Along with his professorship in the School of Pharmacy, he was also an adjunct professor in the University of Pittsburgh's Department of Anthropology. It was during this period that Professor Barry served as President of the Society for Cross-Cultural Research (SCCR), "a global consortium dedicated to the

ans-names.pitt.edu

ISSN: 0027-7738 (print) 1756-2279 (web)

Vol. 73 No. 4, Winter 2025

DOI 10.5195/names.2025.2852



Articles in this journal are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



This journal is published by [Pitt Open Library Publishing](https://pittopenlibrarypublishing.org/).

exploration and understanding of human behavior across cultures" (SCCR n.d.). The SCCR was established in 1972 by a small circle of researchers from a variety of academic disciplines. One of these founding members was Professor Barry.² The titles of his publications in cultural studies reflect the diversity of his interests. Examples include "Traits Inculcated in Childhood: Cross-Cultural Codes" (1976); "Cultural Influences on Childhood Participation in Adult Activities" (1996); and "Customs Associated with Premarital Sexual Freedom in 143 Societies" (2007).

Professor Barry's cultural publications also included numerous studies of names and naming practices. In particular, his onomastic research examined the relationship between personal naming and demographic factors such as gender and race. An examination of the *NAMES* archives reveals a number of publications in this subject-area, many of which are now considered classics in the field. Even many years later, former Editor-in-Chief of *NAMES*, Professor Frank Nuessel (University of Louisville Emeritus), still remembers that Professor Barry "was always courteous and he responded to the useful comments of the anonymous referees".³ As many senior ANS members may remember, Professor Barry co-authored a significant portion of this onomastic scholarship with Dr. Aylene S. Harper, clinical psychologist and psychology professor at Pennsylvania's Community College of Allegheny County. Both were long-time members of the American Name Society, and the Barry and Harper research team were also regular and welcome contributors to many other scholarly onomastic societies, such as the International Council of Onomastic Sciences. About her valued co-author and friend, Professor Harper fondly reminisced that his research "contained the tools of his trade [. . .] Webster's Dictionary and a book of jokes. He drew inspiration from both in his articles. Dr. Barry was a great mentor and friend".⁴ Similarly warm memories were shared by retired professor and Senior Vice Provost of New York's Binghamton University Michael McGoff. As the cherished ANS member recalled: "Herb was a strong supporter of the American Name Society and was a steady and reliable presence at our annual meetings for many years. He was always there to add encouragement to his colleagues. Herb presented his scholarship at numerous meetings and religiously attended the presentations in support of his fellow scholars."⁵ By any standard, the breadth of Professor Barry's scientific achievements are impressive. According to Scopus, over the course of his lifetime, he produced 151 publications and worked with some 79 different scholars as a co-author. As of 2025, that body of work had been cited more than 3,000 times.⁶

Alongside his achievements as a researcher, Professor Barry also made substantive contributions through his philanthropic activities. From 1996 to 2011, he served as the Director of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation. Now called "The Progress and Poverty Institute", this non-profit organization is devoted to promoting social justice, through the equitable distribution of land and public finances.⁷ Over its 100-year history, the Institute has continuously supported research inspired by the theories of 19th century economist and social reformer Henry George. A native New Yorker like Professor Barry, Henry George saw it as his mission to help "improve the condition of the lowest class " by instituting economic policies that would support the equality of opportunity and thereby make it possible that the impoverished member of society would have a realistic chance to achieve a standard of living conducive to health and happiness (George 1881). With that aim in mind, George even ran for office in New York City. Although he ultimately lost to a Democratic candidate, Abram S. Hewitt, George's calls for sweeping socioeconomic reform resonated with large segments of New Yorkers. At the end of the race, George had secured a substantive part of the electorate and even managed to beat the charismatic Republican candidate, future US President Theodore Roosevelt. Like George, Professor Barry devoted much of his scholarship to US politics. Within onomastics, this interest culminated in a series of publications that investigated diachronic patterns in the names of US presidents.

As with his passion for chess, tennis, swimming, travel, and choir music, Professor Barry's fascination with the historical succession of US Presidents lasted his whole life long. At the age of 91, he published a collection of writings which he called "A Professor's Perspective: Essays on the 45, Not 46, U.S. Presidents from Washington to Biden". Three years later, on January 9, 2025, the amiable scholar passed away surrounded by cherished family, friends, and caregivers. On March 15, 2025, a memorial was held at Pittsburgh's Heinz Memorial Cathedral to Professor Barry's death and to celebrate his exceptional life. The scholar is survived by his many nieces and nephews. Instead of flowers, his family asks that contributions be made to the American Civil Liberties Union. The American Name Society expresses not only its heartfelt condolences to Professor Barry's family but also its deep gratitude to the personal and professional contributions of this respected member of the ANS and the international onomastic community.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, the biographical information presented here is taken from obituary notices: <https://obituaries.cremationofpennsylvania.com/obituaries/pittsburgh-pa/herbert-barry-12161453>; <https://obituaries.coloradocommunitymedia.com/obituary/herbert-barry-iii-1092547351/guestbook>

² Upon hearing of Professor Barry's passing, his SCCR colleague and friend, Professor Ralph Bolton posted the following: "I am so sad to learn of Herb's passing, a true gentleman and scholar. I knew him mostly through the Society for Cross Cultural Research. He was a pillar of SCCR, and I always enjoyed talking with him at the annual meeting. Herb was a leader in cross-cultural research with many pioneering contributions. Condolences to his family and friends". Accessed October 21, 2025. <https://obituaries.coloradocommunitymedia.com/obituary/herbert-barry-iii-1092547351/guestbook>

³ Personal e-interview with Professor F. Nuessel, October 11, 2025.

⁴ Personal e-interview with Professor A. Harper, October 26, 2025.

⁵ Personal e-interview with Professor Michael McGoff, October 29, 2025.

⁶ See listing for Herbert Barry III (Scopus ID: 35831579300). Accessed on October 11, 2025. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/author/35831579300/herbert-iii-barry>
<https://progressandpovertyinstitute.org/>

⁷ For more on the Institute, see: <https://progressandpovertyinstitute.org/>

References

- Antelman, Seymour M., et al. 1991. "One Experience with 'Lower' or 'Higher' Intensity Stressors, Respectively Enhances or Diminishes Responsiveness to Haloperidol Weeks Later: Implications for Understanding Drug Variability". *Brain Research* 56, nos. 1-2: 276-283.
- Barry, Herbert III. 1995. "Computers and Research on Personal Names". *Names* 43, no. 4: 315-324.
- Barry, Herbert III. 1996. "Cultural Influences on Childhood Participation in Adult Activities". *Cross-Cultural Research* 30, no. 4: 352-365.
- Barry, Herbert III. 2007. "Customs Associated with Premarital Sexual Freedom in 143 Societies". *Cross-Cultural Research* 34, no. 4.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Aylene S. Harper. 1982. "Evolution of Unisex Names". *Names* 30, no. 1: 15-22.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Aylene S. Harper. 1993. "Feminization of Unisex Names from 1960 to 1990". *Names* 41, no. 4: 228-238.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Aylene S. Harper. 1995. "Increased Choice of Female Phonetic Attributes in First Names". *Sex Roles* 32: 809-819.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Aylene S. Harper. 2001. "Research on First Names by Two Psychologists." *Names* 49, no. 4: 259-262.
- Barry, Herbert, III, and Aylene S. Harper. 2002. "Sex Differences in Linguistic Origins of Personal Names." *Names New and Old*, 243-260. Edited by E. Wallace McMullen. Madison, NJ: Penny Press.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Aylene S. Harper. 2003. "Final Letter Compared with Final Phoneme in Male and Female Names". *Names* 51, no. 1: 13-33.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Aylene S. Harper. 2006. "The Majority of Female First Names Ended in A or E Throughout the Twentieth Century". *Gender Identity, Psychology and Life Style*, 91-116. Edited by A.J. Lauber. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Aylene S. Harper. 2010. "Racial and Gender Differences in Diversity of First Names". *Names* 58, no. 1: 47-54.
- Barry, Herbert, III, and Aylene S. Harper. 2013. "National Differences in Personality and Predictability of Gender from Personal Names". *Cross-Cultural Research* 47, no. 4: 363-371.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Aylene S. Harper. 2014. "Unisex Names for Babies Born in Pennsylvania 1990-2010". *Names* 62, no. 1: 13-22.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Brian L. Yoder. 2002. "Multiple Predictors of Contribution by Women to Agriculture" *Cross-cultural Research* 36, no. 3: 286-297.
- Barry, Herbert III, and Jared J. Jackson. 2007. "Names in the Hebrew Bible". *Names* 55, no. 4: 372-378.
- Barry, Herbert III, Lili Josephson, Edith Lauer, and Catherine Marshall. 1976. "Traits Inculcated in Childhood: Cross-Cultural Codes". *Ethnology* 15, no. 1: 83-114.
- Encyclopedia Britannica. n.d. "Henry George". Accessed October 21, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/money/Henry-George>

- George, Henry. 1881. *Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions, and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth*. New York: D. Appleton and Company.
- Krimmer, Edward C., Martin S. McGuire, and Herbert Barry III. 1984. "Effects of the Training Dose on Generalization of Morphine Stimulus to Clonidine". *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior* 20, no. 5: 669–673.
- Overton, Donald, John Rosecrans, and Herbert Barry III. 1999. "Creation and First 20 Years of the Society for the Stimulus Properties of Drugs (SSPD)" *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior* 64, no. 2: 347–352.
- Society for Cross-Cultural Research. "About". Accessed October 21, 2025. <https://sccr.org/about-2/>
- Thompson, Travis, and Richard A. Meisch. 1971, August 27. "Widely Used Drug: Actions of Alcohol". Book Review of *Actions of Alcohol*, by Henrik Wallgren and Herbert Barry, III. *Science* Accessed 21 October 2025.
- Wallgren, Henrik, and Herbert Barry, III. 1970. *Actions of Alcohol*. Volumes 1 and 2. New York: Elsevier.