

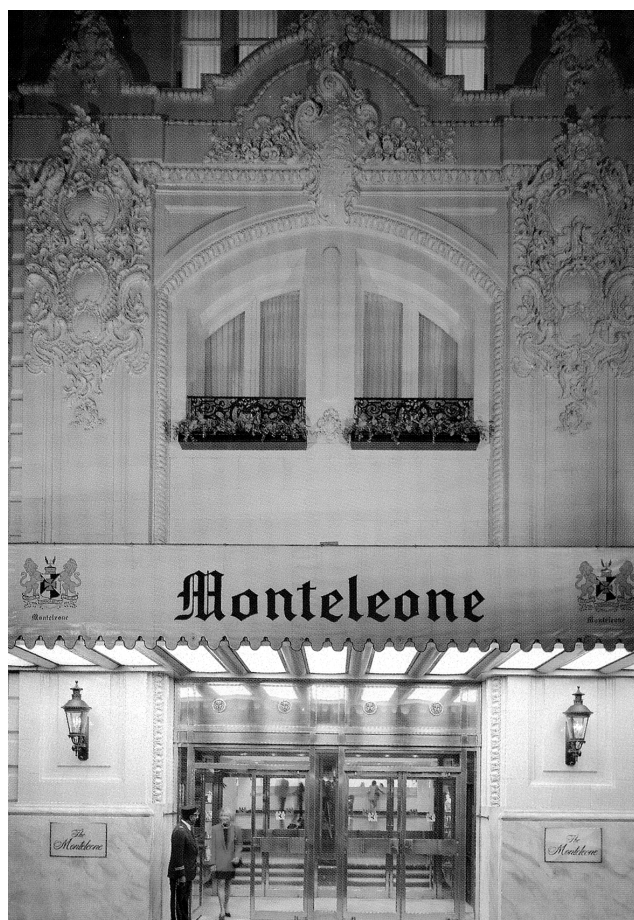


The Southwest Educational Research Association News

Southwest Educational
Research Association

Fall, 2000

Upcoming 2001 Annual Conference



*At the Hotel Monteleone in the Beautiful
French Quarter of New Orleans, LA
Thursday, February 1 through Saturday,
February 3, 2001*

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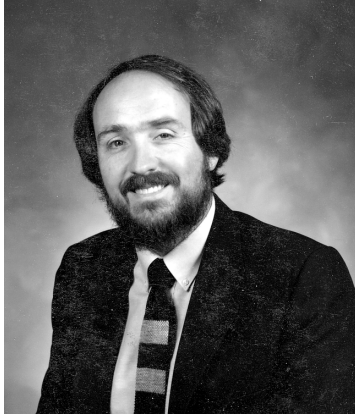
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Register online for the
2001 New Orleans
Conference at [www.
sera-edresearch.org](http://www.sera-edresearch.org).

In Memoriam: Max R. Martin

by Nancy K. Martin

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When I was asked to write an article in memory of my dear friend Max Martin, I jumped at the chance. In fact, I am honored to be able to remember him in this way. However, I'm a little surprised as I stare at the blinking cursor and try to figure out what to say. I've known Max for years. It seems like this would be easy but the idea of a memorial for Max is surreal. All of us who knew

him are in shock over his untimely passing. Also, it's hard to know what to say about someone like Max. How do I sum up such a special life in just a few words? No doubt, an impossible task; still, I will try.

Max passed away on August 18, 2000 at age 52 – eight days after suffering a massive heart attack at home. Prior to his death, Max used his amazing computer and statistical skills as the senior evaluator in the Research and Evaluation Systems Technology Department for one of the poorest school districts in Texas. Ironically, Max began his career as a chemical engineer. He could have done anything he wanted to do, been anything he wanted to be but after a stint as a math teacher at a Catholic school, his path was clear. Education was his calling and it was that road that crossed with mine.

I first came to know Max when we were enrolled in the same doctoral program at Texas Tech University in the early 1980s. We struggled through graduate school together (I struggled more than he) and we formed that special bond that only fellow doctoral students can understand.

We had the same last name and that often led to confusion. His mail was in my box, his students' messages on my answering machine at home. "Would you please tell your husband . . . ?" The idea that we were husband and wife was a natural assumption and we had a lot of fun with it over the years. By coincidence, we both ended up living in San Antonio and both served as Presidents of the Southwest Educational Research Association so the confusion (and fun) continued.

There's nothing like a good story to provide a composite picture of someone. Max and I also had the same dissertation chairman. Dr. Paul Dixon was tough as nails but Max and I were both wise enough to realize a smart choice when we saw one. Everyone knew two things when we enrolled in one of Paul's classes. First, be ready to work hard, and, second, we were going to learn more than we probably wanted to know

about the subject matter. Paul's take-home final exam in Learning Theory was inspired and infamous. It was a dialogue between all the learning theorists studied during the semester. With questions sandwiched in between, we were to respond as Wertheimer, Pavlov, Skinner, etc. The exam was so difficult it was amazing. Required to work independently, we all scurried home to work into the wee hours of the morning via gallons of coffee for days on end. Finally, the due date arrived. Max's answers were brilliantly composed, thoughtful and insightful but he had an added surprise. His answers were not in English. With a little help from his friends, his wife, and his own language skills, Max had written Wertheimer's responses in German, Pavlov's in Russian, and so on. In order to grade the exam, Paul had to enlist assistance from the Foreign Language Department. And, with the help of an international student, his comments to Max were written in Korean. There are so many things we will all miss about Max. If you were around Max you had to at least smile, if not laugh out loud. Doing otherwise was against the rules. He was creative and brilliant, kind and gentle. A giant of a man, everyone knew when he entered a room. In graduate school and later in other professional contexts, people were generally in awe of his intellect. Even when surrounded by some of the best minds in the world, he was respected for his intelligence.

Charlotte Keefe, Professor, Texas Woman's University, was another of Max's dear friends. She described him eloquently. "Max shared his intellect and insights graciously and willingly and usually with uncanny wit. He could 'nail' the essence of a problem with elegance. When I had the privilege of working with him on projects, it was such a pleasure – never a grind because he found humor in even the most trying situations."

Max had so many special gifts. He was a computer whiz, artist, musician, calligrapher, jewelry maker, and photographer. However, what stood out most about him was his spirit. His passing is a loss for us all, even those who never knew him. For the field of education, the nation's school children, teachers, professors, and administrators, we will never know what additional contributions he could have made. His statistical expertise made him sought after by many. "Hey Max, how do you think I should crunch this data?" "What's the best way to

He could have done anything he wanted to do, been anything he wanted to be but after a stint as a math teacher at a Catholic school, his path was clear.

(Continued on page 3)

From the SERA President . . .

Vince Paredes

I hope all you SERA members have had a good summer and are off to a good start with the new school year. By now I am sure you are pretty busy with teaching, learning, writing, research, and other things. Among all these things I hope you find time to make plans to attend the 2001 SERA Annual Meeting in New Orleans. This year's conference in New Orleans is sure to be lively and interesting. Check the website for the preview schedule as conference time draws near. As usual, New Orleans should be a good time!



Although I hope you are able to attend this year's Annual Meeting in New Orleans, I encourage you to join for the year 2001 if you are not able to attend. This assures that you stay on the mailing list, enables you to vote in the election, and allows you to report

that you are a regular and continuous member of SERA. Membership dues are a low \$20.

Before I mention anything else, I must say something about Max Martin. Our membership suffered a great loss with the passing of Max. He was truly a visible and energetic force in SERA. Over the years Max has been a prodigious presenter involved in many a conference session. He also served on the Executive Council and is a past-president of SERA. I will miss his joke-telling and the lively discussions. An informal retrospective session at this year's conference is planned to honor him.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that the selection process was underway for the 2000 Outstanding Paper Award. I am pleased to announce that the winning paper, Reliability and Validity of SERVQUAL Scores Used to Evaluate Perceptions of Library Service Quality (Bruce Thompson and Colleen Cook) was presented at the 2000 AERA Annual Meeting in New Orleans. Colleen Cook presented the paper and represented SERA in an admirable fashion.

Remember to submit your papers for the award. The deadline is shortly after the meeting (February 15). You have until then to revise your paper and submit it for consideration, or you may submit it to Dianne Taylor at the meeting. As usual, a \$500 stipend for travel to AERA is included as part of the award.

At our last Council meeting, the Council took an important step in the growth and stability of the Association. At that meeting Bruce Thompson was named Executive Director of SERA. This is a part-time and volunteer position. One big reason to have an Executive Director is so the Association can have a point of contact that will be stable over the years. Because our president changes every year, much confusion was generated in maintaining contact with AERA and other organizations. Each year, email and regular mail addresses had

to be changed. The Executive Director will also, among other things, foster relations with sponsors and enhance the growth of the Association.

This addition to SERA is also in line with the recent change of the Treasurer position from an elected position to an appointed one. Our appointed staff of Executive Director, Treasurer, Membership Chair, Historian, Graduate Student Advisor, and Newsletter Editor, overseen by and serving at the pleasure of the elected Executive Council, provide the stability, function and institutional knowledge that we need to move the Association forward as a viable and important educational research group.

I am also very pleased to report that the President's Invited Speaker for the 2001 conference will be Barbara McCombs, an expert in motivation in the context of learning and education. Dr. McCombs, formerly of the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory in Denver, Colorado, is now the Director of the Center for Human Motivation, Learning, and Development and Senior Researcher at the Denver Research Institute located on the University of Denver campus. She has more the 25 years of experience directing research and development efforts in a wide range of basic and applied areas.

Her particular expertise is in the area of motivational and self-development training programs for empowering youth and adults. She is the primary author of Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: A Framework for School Redesign and Reform being disseminated by the American Psychological Association's Task Force on Psychology in Education.

As you can see, the Annual Meeting in New Orleans is set to be one of the best yet. I'll see you there!

("In Memoriam," Continued from page 2)

design this study?" He was always willing to take the time to help you figure it out. His own research pertained to a variety of topics including complicated cross-cultural issues. In addition to close-to-home Hispanic educational issues, he also considered cross-cultural issues related to Turkey and Korea that undoubtedly touched lives around the world.

I think we all wonder what people will say about us after we're gone. What will be our legacy? More than anything else, Max was dedicated to his family and to God. His faith was deep and strong. He was happily married to Diane for 25 years – a real accomplishment these days. They were blessed with four children, Jeremy, Max II., Miranda, and Johanna. All of them are as brilliant, creative, and talented as their parents.

Max Martin was my dear friend for almost 20 years. I have the utmost respect and admiration for him both professionally and personally. I am a better person for having known him and I will miss him terribly. Max, from us all, "Well done, my friend. Well done."

SERA Remembered (cont.)

Ed Drahozal, retired
Riverside Publishing Company

As promised in the last newsletter, the following is the conclusion of Ed Drahozal's reflections on the Present and Future of SERA. His reflections on the SERA of the Past can be found in the March 2000 newsletter.

The Present. The contrast between the formative SERA years and the past three years is quite evident if you examine the membership lists and the SERA program. Perhaps ten percent of the members are from school districts. Another five to ten percent are from educational service centers or other organization and enterprises.

A cursory glance of recent programs might lead one to believe that very few presentations pertain to school district issues and practices. A more thorough examination of the programs indicates there are many more school-university collaborative projects than in the past that should be of interest to personnel from school districts and child-centered institutions. In addition, some of the presentations by our college/university members are about policy, scores, norms, equating, and teacher examinations, all of which are important to school district personnel.

Also, some of the presentations in a session are made by people who are affiliated with school districts but are graduate students or are otherwise affiliated with a college or university, such as Spring ISD/Texas A&M. Nevertheless, the representation and participation by school district personnel in SERA functions is much less now than fifteen years ago. This alarms me. Even when you include the exceptional participation from Houston ISD and Spring ISD, school district membership in SERA is at an all-time low.

Despite my concerns about school district underrepresentation, SERA is one of the strongest regional organizations in the United States. I attribute this to the quality of its members and the leadership roles they have in state and national organizations, the service they provide to a wide range of constituencies, and their work ethic. The members from school districts include past presidents and officers of the National Association of Test Directors and people who are actively involved in many state and local projects. Many of the college/university members are recognized nationally and internationally for their involvement with school districts, as well as their competence, leadership, articles, books, and editorial skills. At present SERA has more and better representation of various racial and cultural groups and active participa-

tion by the people in these groups than we've ever had.

Last, even compared to five years ago, the out-of-Texas membership and presenter representation at both the school and college/university level is much greater today. I think this is wonderful! The presentations and discussions provide the member with a much more diverse range of policies and practices than in the "good-old-days." They also make us realize that no education agency, state, or school district has a corner on brains — or stupidity!

The Future. The current status of SERA is not unlike that of several other regional educational research associations. Most of the presentations are made by college or university-based researchers. Of great concern to me is that often no school personnel are directly involved with some of the school-based "collaborative" research or the reporting of that research. This should never be the case.

I believe the future of educational research and educational research organizations will be a function of the amount of good, collaborative school-university research that is done, the diverse group to whom this research is reported, and the clarity with which the research and its implications are provided. In other words do it well, call a spade a spade, and broadcast it to all the constituencies, especially parents. Very little good research is reported to the local newspapers. Reporting of data to school boards, parent-school organizations, and the public needs to be clear, concise, and unequivocal. Perhaps SERA should provide an award for the best university and best school district executive summary of a research project. Such an award may encourage more practical research and provide others with examples of good reporting models.

There is no shortage of data. Every state has a state testing program or two, or three, or four, or more. The data from these programs are often not readily available for a variety of reasons or excuses. Very few states report the most basic data that are supposed to be reported as noted in the *Standards for educational tests*. Although we hear the words "world-class standards" daily, the standards for tests may be at an all-time low. Perhaps a group of SERA people can develop a proposal to one of the SERA states to evaluate the state testing program, make recommendations for improvements, and supervise the implementation of these improvements. There is certainly more talent in SERA than exists in the incestuous panels of "national experts" who shuffle from state to state rubber-stamping existing programs.

**No education
agency, state, or
school district has a
corner on brains—
or stupidity!**

SERA 2000 Outstanding Paper Award Winner!

The 2000 Outstanding Paper Award went to Bruce Thompson (Texas A&M University and Baylor College of Medicine) and Colleen Cook (Texas A&M University) for their paper entitled, "Reliability and Validity of SERVQUAL Scores Used to Evaluate Perceptions of Library Service Quality." A brief abstract of the paper follows. Congratulations Bruce and Colleen!

ABSTRACT

Research libraries are increasingly supplementing collection counts with perceptions of service quality as indices of status and productivity. The present study was undertaken to explore the reliability and validity of scores from the SERVQUAL measurement protocol, which has previously been used in some such applications in libraries. The study involved collection of perceptions from 697 participants representing four different user groups and three different bi-annual surveys. Scores were highly reliable, but the five SERVQUAL dimensions suggested by SERVQUAL scoring keys were not recovered. Furthermore, different dimensions were recovered under three different frames of reference.

More details on this research are available at: <http://acs.tamu.edu/~bbt6147/servqbib.htm>.

**** DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR PAPER FOR THE 2001 AWARD. SEE THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN FOR DETAILS ****



Colleen Cook



Bruce Thompson

Recipients of the SERA 2000 Outstanding Paper Award

From the Program Chair . . .

Dianne Taylor

Fall is a wonderful time of year, especially in south Louisiana. While we don't have the change of leaves enjoyed in other states, we do have mild, pleasant days that beckon us to abandon our computers in favor of a long walk in a pleasant neighborhood or a hike in the woods. For those of us involved in SERA, fall also means waiting for word from SERA division chairs that our proposals have been accepted. This year, acceptance means you're New Orleans bound.

The 2001 program promises to be exciting. The small portion of the proposals I saw were excellent. Sessions will address such topics as educational leadership, research methods and statistical analyses, teaching and learning, and more.

The program will also feature several invited sessions exploring "front burner" topics affecting our research agendas and district programs. In addition, graduate students will have professional development opportunities, with sessions devoted to strategies for getting published and preparing for job interviews, among others.

The annual meeting is a bit later than usual this year. SERA

will convene on Thursday, February 1 and conclude on Saturday, February 3. The meeting will be held in the Hotel Monteleone, one of the oldest and finest hotels in the city. In the heart of the "Quarter," as locals say, the Monteleone offered a special rate of \$128 for single and double rooms. To get the convention rate, you must book your room 30 days in advance of the meeting. Call toll free at (800) 535-9595, or visit their web site at www.hotelmonteleone.com.

Let me also encourage you to submit your paper for the SERA Outstanding Paper Award. In addition to the recognition and honor of receiving the award, SERA offers a generous award of \$500 to offset the costs of attending AERA, where the paper is also presented.

Look for hotel and other information in this newsletter, including information allowing you to register for the meeting on-line. Please feel free to call (225-578-2192) or e-mail me (dtaylor@lsu.edu) with any questions. I look forward to seeing each of you at the annual meeting in February.

Register Online at:
www.sera-edresearch.org



**Southwest Educational
Research Association**

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Graduate Student Corner

Hello graduate students! I must say that the past nine months has flown by quickly. There are a few updates of which I need to make you aware as you plan to attend the conference in February. I am finalizing the establishment of a list-serve for graduate members of SERA and will have this available for you soon. The list-serve will be sponsored by a faculty member at Texas Tech University and will be available to all graduate members. I realize that as of February I will no longer represent the SERA in my current role, however the list serve will remain active and will be available for the incoming graduate representative. This is a vital link that must be established as I have realized over the past few months the difficult task of maintaining communication with each of you. In addition, SERA will continue the reimbursement program for those of you who are willing to put in some

time working the registration desk during the conference. As the date for the conference approaches please contact me via email (david.allen@ttu.edu) to schedule your time for working the registration desk. Be sure to check the SERA web site in the near future for information related to the list-serve. Good luck this semester and I will see you in February.



David Allen
Grad Student Rep
Texas Tech Univ.

*Update your contact
information on the
web!!*

*Use your password found in the corner of any SERA
publication mailing label. Just log on to the website and
keep us posted!*

**SERA Web-Site:
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