

A mid-life career change that results in a distinguished scientific achievement is striking in itself; our admiration intensifies when this achievement opens for us something as basic as a new perspective on the nature of early childhood.

Harriet Rheingold became a research scientist only after securing her Ph.D. at the University of Chicago while in her mid-forties. Before that time this native of New York City, with a B.A. from Cornell and an M.A. from Columbia, had brought up two sons, worked as a supervising psychologist at the Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research in Chicago, and taught at Rockford College in northern Illinois. After gaining her doctorate in 1955 she joined the Section on Early Development of the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda; and in 1964 became Research Professor of Psychology here, generating her entire salary and research costs through external grants until her retirement in 1978.

She has concentrated her investigations primarily on the social and exploratory capacities of human infants, demonstrating that when given a chance young children possess the ability to educate and socialize themselves and the world around them. Even "terrible two's" are shown to be willing and eager to help, to share, and to obey the actions of adults who take them seriously. Thus her research, in its unique blend of psychological and biological approaches to the analysis of behavior, has supported a fundamentally hopeful view of human development.

Her contributions to her field have been recognized by the G. Stanley Hall Award of the American Psychological Association in 1977; to her graduate alma mater by the Professional Achievement Award of the University of Chicago Alumni Association in 1979; and to this University by the conferring now of this richly-deserved degree of Doctor of Science.