

American Psychological Association
Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award

1977

presented to

Richard Chatham Atkinson

For combining classical methods of mathematics with emerging techniques of computer science, the best traditions of experimental psychology with new concepts of information processing, in the advancement of psychological theory and its applications. His long-term collaboration with Patrick Suppes yielded among its fruits the first extensive application of learning theory to multi-person interactions. With Richard M. Shiffrin, Atkinson developed the model that has set the pace for research on human short-term memory; with James Juola and others he developed an almost equally influential family of models for recognition and search processes. And on a quite different tack, Atkinson anticipated current demands for “relevance” with his pioneering contributions to computer-assisted instruction and optimization of learning.