John L. Holland: A Personal Introduction

Practitioners sometimes select tests and materials despite knowing little about the author or authors. In fact, some guidance and counseling products don't even list an author. However, the Self-Directed Search (SDS) has clear origins. It was not created by a committee, task force, or corporation. There were no government grants, foundation awards, or agency initiatives in 1960 when work on it began. The SDS and its related products flowed from the imagination, intelligence, creativity, concern, drive, determination, persistence, and persuasiveness of a single author: John Lewis Holland.

As I (Robert) reflected more about the history behind many of our career guidance tools, I thought it appropriate to start with a personal sketch of John Holland. Dr. Holland was the original source of the SDS and RIASEC theory, so it makes sense to begin this book with him. Many questions can be examined: What was his background? What was he like? What was he trying to do in his life and career? Why did he create the SDS? What was he doing after he retired and before he died? How have others reacted to his work? This chapter will explore these questions and more.

Before moving forward, we should add that although many assessments use Holland's RIASEC theory in one way or another, only the SDS was developed by Holland. Various inventories produce a "Holland Code," but those assessments were not developed based on Holland's theory. The authors of those inventories adopted the theory after their instruments were developed, and they incorporated a two- or three-letter code to present their results. Sometimes people will say, "Just help me find an inventory that produces a Holland Code," not realizing that such instruments were not developed by Holland himself. This is important because it means not every Holland Code is derived in the same way. Different instruments produce different codes. Only the SDS has Holland's imprint or authorship.

Authors develop practical tools, and even theories, with specific purposes in mind. As practitioners, we can make better use of these professional products and materials when we know about the author's philosophy, goals, values, and purposes. With this knowledge, we can further identify with the author's mission and, in our judgment, make more effective use of the materials.

We will demonstrate how our knowledge of Holland, which includes insights shared by others, has enabled us to make better use of the SDS and other materials that he created. We hope this will help others identify with the spirit and essence of Holland's work.

A Personal History with Holland, by Robert

My contact with Holland began in 1970 when I read about the creation of a new inventory that could be self-scored and used in a self-guided way. It was just what I had been looking for and the missing piece for Florida State University's self-help oriented career services program.

In the university counseling center at that time, most of the counselors, including clinical psychologists and social workers, were not very interested in educational or vocational counseling—even though this was what 75% of the clients reported they wanted when seeking services. Given the staff's reluctance to provide career counseling, I proposed a program that would provide an alternative to the counselor-based "intake–testing–follow-up appointment" service system that too often produced a client waiting list and other delays in services. The proposed program would put more responsibility for educational and career services directly into clients' hands.

So, several people at the university set out to establish a self-directed career decision-making program, the Curricular-Career Information Service (CCIS), that would provide a series of self-help stations in an empty office in

the counseling center (Reardon & Minor, 1975). Each station had a print-based module. The first five consisted of (a) an introduction to the program, (b) instruction on decision making, (c) a self-assessment of interests, (d) indexes to files of information and the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, and (e) the names of faculty contacts and other referral sources for additional information. All stations had been finished except the one for self-assessment. (Learn more about the development and evaluation of the CCIS program in Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon [1991] and Reardon [1996].)

Career assessment options in Module 3 included the Strong Vocational Interest Blank (SVIB), the Kuder Interest Inventory Form DD, the Jackson Vocational Interest Survey, and some others. All options required machine scoring or the use of scoring stencils. None provided the kind of stand-alone assessment needed. When the team reviewed a prepublication copy of the SDS, they knew it was the missing piece to make their self-directed career program idea work. From the very beginning, the SDS has been a mainstay of career services at Florida State University, and it has used between 600 and 1,000 copies a year since 1972 when the CCIS program started.

Early on, Holland wrote about a self-directed career planning program (Holland, Hollifield, Nafziger, & Helms, 1972), so it's ironic that the "self-directed" feature of the SDS remains one of the least understood and least exploited aspects of this career services innovation. After conducting almost 100 workshops and presentations about the SDS around the world since 1974, we still get the sense that some practitioners use the SDS just as they would any other interest test.

Here's how it often seems to work: A practitioner assigns the SDS, and then the client makes a second appointment with the testing office to complete the instrument. The testing office sends the results and perhaps a report back to the practitioner for interpretation. Consequently, there is little personal connection between the practitioner and the client. This represents a wasted opportunity to provide an immediate and full response to the client at the time of his or her initial contact for service.

In this scenario, the SDS is an underused tool for helping clients quickly and efficiently obtain the kind of information that helps them solve educational and vocational problems. As we will demonstrate in Chapter 8, the SDS can be used to deliver services more quickly and efficiently.

In summary, the notion of a self-directed career assessment may be one of the most important features of the SDS. It certainly had a huge impact on us as practitioners and developers of career services programs for the past 40 years.

Viewing Holland From the RIASEC Perspective

We can gain insights into Holland himself by examining his RIASEC theory and personal SDS assessment results.

What Was Holland's RIASEC Code?

Holland's scores on his own SDS assessment provide remarkable insights into the design and use of the tool.

RIASEC codes are based on six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional. A person's scores in these six areas suggest which occupations might best suit their personalities. (For more information, see Primary Assumption #1 in Chapter 2).

In December 1990, Stephen Weinrach (1996) convinced John Holland and Donald Super to complete a series of inventories and psychological tests that included the SDS assessment. Holland's personal scores were R (Realistic) = 26, I (Investigative) = 27, A (Artistic) = 29, S (Social) = 26, E (Enterprising) = 29, and C (Conventional) = 8. His resulting code was A/EI. This means that the numbers associated with the first two letters of the score (A and E) were tied, and the scores associated with the first five letters of the instrument were separated by only 3 points. Experienced SDS users will recognize this as a case of an undifferentiated, elevated profile (we discuss this more fully in Chapter 9). Holland's score on the C dimension was clearly different from the scores on the other five. (In passing, it is useful to note that because the A and E were tied, a slight edge went to the A because it had more points on the Occupations Scale of the SDS, 8 versus 5.)

Holland's own calculation of his code was AEI/R/S (Weinrach, 1996). How did he arrive at this? He probably remembered the "Rule of 8," which is based on the standard error of measurement of the SDS, whereby score differences of fewer than 8 points on the SDS may be considered trivial. In addition, Holland probably noted that his Occupational Daydreams scores on the SDS were S = 15, A = 13, E = 11, R = 6, I = 5, and C = 0, creating a code of SAE. We'll talk more about "scoring daydreams" in Chapter 4. Holland listed eight occupations in the Daydreams section: psychologist/researcher (social psychologist = ASE), writer (AES), research administrator (research worker = IER), vocational counselor (counselor = SAE), college teacher (SEI), counseling center director (counselor =

SAE), musician = (ASI), and engineer (RES). In Chapters 4, 8, 9, and 10, we will discuss more fully the importance and significance of these ideas in interpreting SDS results.

What Do These SDS Results Tell Us About Holland?

In reviewing these results, Holland observed to Weinrach (1996) that both he and Super were Social types "who might have benefited from some career counseling or who might have pursued any one of several related occupations" (p. 12). In thinking about what Holland's code tells us about the author, it is important to keep an eye on the Artistic aspect of Holland's personality. "A" was the first letter of the codes for his first two Daydream occupations, and it was tied for the highest code in his SDS summary score. As we will learn in Chapter 2, A types are very independent, creative, innovative, and imaginative. They also tend to defy some social conventions or common rules for doing things. Holland's contributions to career theory and practice were unique among his contemporaries, and they remain so today. Indeed, the Self-Directed Search and many of the resources that grew out of John Holland's work are most understandable when viewed from an Artistic perspective.

As noted earlier, Holland's Aspirations Summary Code, the combined code of all eight occupations he listed, is SAE. This is also the code for career counselor. In this sense, Holland was "one of us." He had many of the personality traits and interests of practicing counselors. We think this helps counselors relate to what Holland and his works were all about because he approached his work from a practitioner's perspective.

Introducing "A Man of All Types"

As noted earlier, Holland had an undifferentiated or "flat" RIASEC profile with no single high-point code; he had many interests and competencies. Sometimes this makes it difficult to get a quick picture of what he was like as a person.

I was once asked to introduce John Holland at a workshop about the SDS. I was having trouble figuring out what to say about Holland, so I consulted someone who had written about and been associated with Holland: Adam Lackey (1975). Lackey pointed out that Holland's contributions revealed someone with diverse interests and abilities. He noted that Holland's SDS was the most frequently reported and used vocational assessment device in counseling history in the mid-1980s (Watkins, Bradford, Lew, & Himmell, 1986). He added that 30 years later, the SDS is the third most frequently used assessment, according to a national sample of counselors (Peterson, Lomas, Neukrug, & Bonner, 2014). In addition, the SDS has been translated and adapted into more than 27 languages. Psychological Assessment Resources (PAR, Inc.), the publisher, reports that more than 35 million people worldwide have used the various Holland-based guidance materials. As his high E score reflected, Holland was certainly Enterprising.

Lackey also noted that Holland had a knack for getting his friends and associates to work with and for him (evidence of some S for Social in his code). This is a noteworthy trait for a researcher and is especially important because Holland never had a group of graduate students around to do his work or a federal sponsor to support his projects. He produced more than 200 published works, many of which were coauthored.

According to Lackey, Holland really did read all 12,099 occupations in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* to determine whether his first letter codes matched those generated empirically by a formula devised by Gary Gottfredson. He found 35 that did not (evidence of some C for Conventional in his code). Lackey also noted that when Holland retired from Johns Hopkins University in 1980, he was in the top 0.1% of publishing psychologists in America. He had averaged six publications per year since 1953, which could be taken as evidence of I for Investigative in his code.

There is additional evidence about the diversity of Holland's interests. In the late 1970s, we developed a tactile board version of the SDS for use by persons with visual disabilities (Barker, White, Reardon, & Johnson, 1980; Reardon & Kahnweiler, 1980). When Holland met the woodworker who had crafted the boards, they got into an intense discussion about the origins of the wood used in the boards. In listening to that exchange, I learned that Holland was a woodworker who had collected wood from around the world. Holland told Weinrach (1980) about his interests in furniture making and wood crafts, evidence of the R for Realistic in his code.

One last thing regarding Holland's varied interests. He took piano lessons from age 12 to 22 and toyed with becoming a musician until he noticed that in the typical stair-step recitals, there was always some little kid who made everyone else look bad (American Psychological Association, 1995, p. 236). Later, Holland noted that in retirement he still pursued his aborted musical career by taking piano lessons, and he added voice lessons in 1993 (APA, p. 238). Holland also told Weinrach (1980) about purchasing a grand piano with some early royalties from the SDS and about his interest in collecting art (more evidence of A for Artistic).

After reading about John Holland and thinking about RIASEC codes, we find it easier to understand why Holland's code was undifferentiated. But we're not quite finished. Think about the name Adam Lackey. Can you think of a time you might have referred to someone as a "lackey"? We can't finish a profile of John L. Holland without noting his sense of humor. Adam Lackey, my supposed trusted source for information about Holland, never existed as a colleague of Holland's; the name was a pseudonym that Holland and others created to acknowledge authorship of a work (Lackey, 1975) for which no one wanted to take primary credit.

Holland's Background

Additional insights into Holland's personality can be found in various places. For example, revealing comments were made in a 1988 video interview with Dr. Jack Rayman when Holland commented about RIASEC theory and the SDS. It was produced and directed by Dr. Helen Harkness of Career Design Associates (1988) and can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCENvpjHZ30.

Another video of Holland is available at http://www.vocopher.org/CCHolland/CCHolland.html. Holland (1992) gave this talk at a conference at Michigan State University, which later appeared in a book edited by Savickas and Lent (1994). A published interview conducted by Steve Weinrach (1980), cited earlier in this chapter, includes comments that are the essence of Holland's spirited views about his work and his critics. The citation (which I believe he wrote himself) on the occasion of his receiving the American Psychological Association Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions (APA, 1995) also provides insights into his personality. However, the most revealing window into Holland's views about his work—and the work of his contemporaries—is the article based on a speech given at a testing conference in Minnesota, "Vocational Guidance for Everyone" (Holland, 1974; http://www.jstor.org/stable/1175242). The following paragraphs draw upon these materials using a question-and-answer format.

What Was Holland's Family Background?

Holland "was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on October 21, 1919, into a lower-class family of English-Irish ancestry. His father had emigrated from London at age 20, worked as laborer, took night courses at the YMCA, and eventually became a successful advertising executive (AES). His mother had been an elementary school teacher (SEC) before her marriage. Both parents had marked intellectual interests and put all four children (John was the second of three boys, and a girl) through college" (APA, 1995, p. 236).

As an adult, Holland and his wife, Elsie, to whom *Making Vocational Choices* (MVC; Holland, 1997) is dedicated, had three children, two girls (ISA, ASE) and one boy (RSA) (Weinrach, 1980). Elsie, a secretary (CSE) working at a YWCA, died after Holland retired from Johns Hopkins in 1980. Case studies in the *SDS Professional User's Guide* (Holland, Powell, & Fritsche, 1994) include the SDS profiles of his children, as well as friends and other family members.

What Kind of Student Was Holland?

Holland started as a music student at the Municipal University of Omaha. He tried the physical sciences but switched to psychology and liked it. He graduated in 1942 and then spent three and a half years in the army working in psychological and social services. One of his jobs was to interview and evaluate soldiers who would enter pilot training in the U.S. Army Air Corps. Upon leaving the army, Holland decided to become a psychologist and entered the University of Minnesota for a degree in counseling psychology. Self-described as an "average student," Holland was probably not highly congruent with the strong empirical, data-driven characteristics of the Minnesota environment. "In the 1940s, psychology at Minnesota was pro 'show me the evidence' and anti-Freud, Rogers, typologies, and most of all, anti-speculation" (APA, 1995, p. 237). Holland's dissertation focused on a validation of some speculations about art and personality, a topic that he noted did not sit well with fellow students or faculty. (Readers will recall the earlier suggestion to keep an eye on Holland's A.)

Spokane and Shultheis (1996) noted that "Holland was not entirely in the 'Minnesota Mold' when he graduated in 1952" (p. 27). "A rebel by nature, Holland was as interested in the intervention side of measurement as he was in the scaling side" (p. 28). However, Spokane and Shultheis concluded that Holland was more steeped in the Minnesota tradition than he often acknowledged. For example, his research style was characterized by relentless empirical trials and examinations, followed by theoretical reformulations. This combination of theory and data was largely responsible for the success of the theory and its numerous inventories and interventions (Spokane & Shultheis, 1996).

Did Holland Really Get Fired at ACT?

In the interview with Weinrach (1980), Holland discussed his involuntary job loss at the American College Testing (ACT) Program in 1969, citing it as one of the

most painful experiences in his life. Holland went to ACT as a vice president for research and development after working for several years at the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. He reported developing a serious administrative disagreement with the president about an ACT product and walking out of a meeting to protest a management decision. His staff walked out with him, and he was terminated. Getting on the phone the day he was fired, he obtained several offers and, about a month later, he accepted a position at Johns Hopkins University. In characteristic tone, Holland told Weinrach, "My interpretation of what happened eventually was that I was the wrong type for that environment. The ACT people were more business-minded than I was. I was more interested in developing knowledge about college students and their institutions" (Weinrach, 1980, p. 412).

How Did the Army and Minnesota Experiences Affect Holland's Thinking?

Holland's work in the army involved a brief 15-minute interview with recruits to gather personal information, and he soon learned that, despite the infinite complexity of the human personality, he could correctly anticipate interview responses because of the stable, common core of personality characteristics. In these brief interviews, Holland began to observe personal typology in operation. He reported that his 4-year practicum experience in counseling centers—devoted largely to career counseling, plus an early job as a career counselor at Western Reserve University—was frustrating and depressing with regard to assessment tools. Holland began to look for alternatives. He found that scoring delays and incomplete information about a person's interests and occupational aspirations were difficult to handle. In 1953, Holland began the development of the Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI; Holland, 1985) as a lark. His thinking went like this: "Why not use only occupational titles as items and create scales for the main kinds of occupations rather than for single occupations?" (American Psychological Association, 1995, p. 237). (Again, remember the A in Holland's code.) The VPI became the research tool that inductively verified the existence of the RIASEC typology and later led to the development of the SDS itself.

Holland's Creation of the Self-Directed Search

Why Did Holland Develop the SDS?

On September 20, 1973, Holland was invited back to the University of Minnesota to give a speech at the annual conference of the Minnesota Statewide Testing Programs. The speech, entitled "Some Practical Remedies for Providing Vocational Guidance for Everyone," was published in the *Educational Researcher* (Holland, 1974). In his remarks, Holland identified and responded to some popular "myths" that he thought had restrained progress in career theory and practice. The following paragraph shows his response to one of those myths, the idea that "counseling must be personal":

> The counseling and teaching professions attract a large proportion of friendly people who must love and be loved in order to get through the day. Consequently, they believe that other people also must have the same needs with the same intensity. As a natural corollary, many also believe that any form of vocational intervention must provide for a person-to-person situation. These beliefs have prevented any major revision of the delivery system for vocational services. Some experience and recent experiments strongly imply that most people want help, not love. In no case has an impersonal information or guidance system received a lower average rating than local counselors. To the contrary, most tests reveal that impersonal schemes are more highly rated as well as infinitely cheaper, have better attendance records, and are generally more dependable. In short, there is ample empirical evidence to support more impersonal approaches for the solution of vocational problems. (Holland, 1974, p. 10)

This quote provides an insight into Holland's development and use of the SDS and related tools.

In another quote taken from the *SDS Professional Users Guide* (Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1994), Holland responded to the question, "Why did you develop the SDS?"

> My recollections of the origins of the SDS and of my motivation at that time (1970) now vary from year to year. The more stable memories are that I wanted to see if I could create an inventory that would be self-scored and would avoid the problems involved in separate answer sheets, mailing, scoring, and so on. I did not anticipate the positive reactions that the SDS stimulated in users and professionals. (p. 51)

How Did Holland Go about Creating the SDS?

In an interview with Stephen Weinrach (1980), Holland described the people, events, and ideas that led to the creation of the Self-Directed Search. We will briefly summarize them, but readers are encouraged to read the original materials cited in this chapter to get the full story.

In the Weinrach (1980) interview, Holland noted that the SDS evolved over a period of years, roughly 1953-1970,

in rhythm with the development of the RIASEC theory and the VPI. The VPI came first and demonstrated that short scales of equal length scored "yes" and arranged in RIASEC order could provide a basis for effective measurement. Holland credited many others for little things involving the creation of the SDS. For example, he credited Tom Magoon, the director of the Counseling Center at the University of Maryland, for providing the words "self-directed," and he credited Chuck Elton for giving him the idea of self-scoring.

Early creations that had some features of what later became the SDS were developed at the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and at ACT. In particular, the College Guidance Profile, developed at ACT in 1967, had features in common with the SDS Assessment Booklet, but it turned out to be a financial and artistic failure, according to Holland (Weinrach, 1980). One of the things that Holland gained from these initial experiences was the realization that a self-scored instrument would be useful only if there was a corresponding list of occupational possibilities.

After arriving at Johns Hopkins from ACT, Holland acquired several sets of data about occupations, including SVIB archives data donated by David Campbell (Weinrach, 1980). These events enabled Holland to begin developing a comprehensive occupational classification and to begin to develop a prototype SDS booklet in 1970.

> I asked Joan, my daughter, to take it [the prototype]. Joan could follow the directions, but I had forgotten to work out the self-scoring procedure. Nor did I have any good ideas of how to do it. As it turned out, the scoring was the final and most difficult task. With the aid of neighborhood kids, my family, and Tom Magoon and his University of Maryland students, we tried multiple techniques to develop a simple scoring procedure. We obtained a useful method in 1970, but some remaining difficulties were not effectively dealt with until the revision of the scoring procedure in 1977. (Weinrach, 1980, p. 409)

The *SDS Professional Manual* (Holland & Messer, 2013b) provides a brief review of the changes made in the SDS over time. Many of the early criticisms of the SDS were corrected in subsequent editions of the instrument.

Recognition of Holland's Unique Contributions

At the time of Holland's retirement from Johns Hopkins University in 1980 at the age of 60, Gary Gottfredson and others prepared a written celebration of his work. Gottfredson (1980) identified four important contributions that Holland had made to the field. (We have updated some of the details as needed.)

Intellectual contributions. These include Holland's studies of college environments and students' personalities in relation to college adjustment; the Environmental Assessment Technique, with its focus on the environment when other career theorists were looking exclusively at personality; the RIASEC theory of careers; Holland's responses to critical reviews, with additional empirical research studies or modification of earlier views; and studies of nonacademic predictors as useful measures of student academic performance.

Practical devices. Holland's practical career resources include the Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI; Holland, 1985); the Self-Directed Search (SDS Forms R, E, and Career Explorer); My Vocational Situation (MVS; Holland, Gottfredson, & Power, 1980); the *Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes* (DHOC; Gottfredson & Holland, 1996); the Career Attitudes and Strategies Inventory (CASI; Holland & Gottfredson, 1994); and the Position Classification Inventory (PCI; Gottfredson & Holland, 1991). RIASEC theory was incorporated into many other career interventions, including the Strong Interest Inventory (Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, & Hammer, 1994); most computer-based guidance systems (e.g., Discover, Choices); and many career information reference materials (e.g., Occupational Information Network [O*NET; http://www.onetonline.org/] and Bolles' best-selling *What Color Is Your Parachute?*)

"Unfrocking" contributions. Holland poked at some "sacred cows" in the career guidance field. Gottfredson noted that Holland repeatedly challenged popular, prevailing views among psychologists and that he used empirical evidence to present sharply divergent and usually practical points of view. During a conversation years ago, Holland told me (Robert) about an SDS presentation he made at a conference: An esteemed measurement psychologist stood up in a crowded room and, with a very red face and wagging his finger, said, "You can't do that." There are many aspects of the SDS, as we shall learn later, that could have triggered that response.

Influence on others. Holland influenced the thinking and work of others, and his work was widely cited (Watkins et al., 1986). Indeed, Holland's RIASEC theory is arguably stimulating more research practice than any other theory. Foutch, McHugh, Bertock, and Reardon (2014) identified almost 2,000 reference citations to Holland's theory and applications between 1953 and 2011.

In 1994, Holland received an award from the American Psychological Association for "Distinguished Professional

Contributions to Applied Psychology as a Professional Practice." This award put Holland in a highly esteemed class of research and professional psychologists and it helps counselors verify that the body of work that Holland created was well respected and important within psychology. The scope and quality of Holland's contributions can be a source of inspiration and confidence for us as counselors working with clients.

Shortly before his death, Holland was gratified to learn that the American Psychological Association had recognized him with the prestigious Distinguished Scientific Award for the Applications of Psychology (Holland, 2008). This award honors psychologists who have made distinguished theoretical or empirical advances in psychology leading to the understanding or amelioration of important practical problems. The citation read:

> John L. Holland, PhD, a pioneer in vocational and personality psychology, is best known for his theory of vocational personalities and work environments. His research found that people are most likely to enter and continue to work in occupations that are compatible with their personality types. He has developed several devices to assist in occupational development—including the Holland Self-Directed Search and the Holland Vocational Preference Inventory—which match personality profiles with occupation profiles. His work expresses the significance that vocational choice is the implementation of a self-concept—a notion that has revolutionized vocational assistance worldwide. His award recognizes these outstanding contributions.

This award was a significant capstone to Holland's career.

Obituaries

After thinking about it for a while, we decided that an obituary section should be added to this book. Obituaries that provide a brief biography and eulogize a person in our field can be interesting and provide new insights into the person's life and work. Typically, these articles are written by close associates, perhaps colleagues or mentees. Those included here were written by such persons associated with John Holland, and they were published in journals.

Gary Gottfredson, *American Psychologist*, 2009

Gary Gottfredson was probably Holland's closest associate for more than 30 years. Together, they collaborated in producing major contributions to both the theory and practical tools. "John L. Holland's theory of vocational personalities and work environments transformed vocational assistance worldwide. Only a few behavioral scientists could combine the capacity for bold speculation, persistent empirical tests, and data-guided revision that Holland showed over the course of his career" (Gottfredson, 2009, p. 561). Gottfredson added that "John used witty satire to disparage some trends in counseling and vocational psychology. For instance, in a chapter of Savickas and Spokane's 1999 book *Vocational Interests*, he wrote, 'Thanks to constructivist speculation ... my personal memories now have publishable merit. It is great to be free of that misguided empirical straitjacket of reliable and valid information' (p. 87). He disapproved of the way these two fields have often wandered away from their empirical roots."

Jo-Ida C. Hansen, *The Counseling Psychologist*, 2011

Jo-Ida Hansen, a professor in the University of Minnesota's Department of Psychology, directs the counseling psychology program and the Center for Interest Measurement Research. She was instrumental in the successful nomination of Holland for the University of Minnesota Honorary Doctorate of Science in 2001. She described Holland as "one of the most influential psychologists of the 20th century, with name recognition equal to that of B. F. Skinner and P. E. Meehl. He also is one of the most influential psychologists of the 21st century (Hansen, 2011, p. 1212). Hansen further noted, "Holland has been described as a curmudgeon and a strong character, but these traits were softened by a wonderful sense of humor. He was known for his willingness to help graduate students and colleagues—offering generously his ideas and intellectual support, not to mention the financial support he personally provided to fund good research. His presentations at conferences drew full houses because we knew he always had something interesting, or provocative, or even humorous to say" (p. 1216).

James A. Athanasou, *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 2009

James Athanasou, an adjunct professor at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia, was previously an associate professor there before his retirement in 2008. Athanasou (2009) wrote, "In a career world of changing ideas and short-lived concepts, the late John Lewis Holland provided a theory of vocational personalities that dominated career guidance almost as much as that of its founder, Frank Parsons" (p. 56). He added, "By any standard, he was an international force in career development research that also shaped thinking in Australia"

(p. 56). Holland's presentations in Australia prompted the publication of a book, *Holland in Australia* (Lokan & Taylor, 1986), the development of an Australian edition of the SDS, and the drafting of an Australian Standard Classification of Occupations.

Robert C. Reardon, *Career Developments*, 2009

I hesitated to insert my own tribute to Holland in this section and decided to reproduce only the first and last paragraphs (Reardon, 2009, p. 3).

"John Holland's death on November 27, 2008, Thanksgiving Day, marked the end of a remarkable life. I think of him as the preeminent career counselor, theorist, and researcher of my lifetime. My first thought was to give thanks for this man and his work because it is hard for me to imagine my life apart from John's contributions. He influenced counseling and psychology throughout the world in ways that are only partially understood and appreciated. At the personal level, John Holland positively influenced me in innumerable ways. He was my hero and a valued mentor.

"The scope and impact of the RIASEC Hexagon and all that it represents continues to unfold as persons explore personality and environments in vocation. John Holland's contributions will continue to expand as researchers and counselors explore the complexities and simplicity of his ideas. While this tribute cannot be long enough to acknowledge the extent of his contributions and influence, an enduring honor will be the commitment to continue to improve the theory and the SDS. This is something he taught me, and it can be a legacy that we all share" (Reardon, 2009, p. 3).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a foundation for understanding RIASEC theory, the SDS, and related tools by examining the life of its creator, John Holland. The remaining chapters will elaborate on ideas and themes presented here. We remind ourselves that the clearest presentation of Holland's theoretical and practical ideas are found in his own words rather than those provided by others. John Holland's SDS Summary Code (AEI/R/S) and his Aspirations Summary Code (SAE) reveal much about his personality and interests and the beliefs and values that led him to create the SDS and other practical guidance tools. Understanding Holland's personality and life history can be useful in understanding the design and development of the SDS. It can also enable users of the SDS to extend the use of RIASEC theory and instruments in new, creative ways that are consistent with the original purposes of the author.