

Howard Eichenbaum, a William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor and a College of Arts & Sciences professor of psychological and brain sciences, director of BU's [Center for Memory and Brain](#) and the [Laboratory of Cognitive Neurobiology](#), and an internationally recognized figure in advancing the understanding of the fundamental [nature and mechanisms of memory](#), died in Boston on Friday at age 69, following recent spinal surgery.

"Howard's contributions to science and the neuroscience community are immense," says David Somers (GRS'93), a professor and chair of psychological and brain sciences and director of the [Attention and Perception Neuroimaging Laboratory](#). "His leadership and vision paved the way for so much here at BU and his impact on our community will continue to be felt for decades to come. This is truly a huge loss for the department and the neuroscience community, both at BU and beyond."

Eichenbaum studied the neuropsychology of memory in animals and the characterization of memory coding properties of neurons. "He did groundbreaking experimental and theoretical work on the role of the hippocampus in the formation of memory," Somers says.

His extensive empirical findings, including the discovery of "time cells" in the hippocampus; his integrative approach, which synthesized results across species, across methods, and across levels of analysis; and his important theoretical advances concerning multiple memory systems of the brain, all helped advance our understanding of how memory works and how it is organized in the brain. He was also known for his mentorship, guidance, and encouragement of scores of undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior faculty who went on to have significant impact on the field, and for his remarkable history of service and leadership.

Eichenbaum was a former chair of the psychological and brain sciences department and founder of what is now called the Graduate Program for Neuroscience, as well as the undergraduate major in neuroscience.

He was elected in 2015 to the [American Academy of Arts & Sciences](#) and was a Fellow of both the American Association for the Advancement of Science, where he was chair of the Section on Neuroscience, and the Association for Psychological Science. He was editor-in-chief of the scientific journal [Hippocampus](#) and served on the Council of the Society for Neuroscience and the National Institute of Mental Health [National Advisory Mental Health Council](#).

Beyond his scientific contributions, he will be remembered for his generous contributions to the field, including mentoring many scores of students, postdocs, and junior faculty, colleagues say.

Eichenbaum's nonscience pursuits included coaching his two sons' Little League baseball teams for many years, taking them around the country on their "baseball-parks-of-America tour"—a quest to catch a game at every Major League Baseball Park in America that spanned 6 summers across 15 years, kayaking in the waters off Chatham, Mass., and rooting passionately for his Boston Red Sox and University of Michigan teams.

He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Karen J. Shedlack, his two sons, Alexander E. Eichenbaum and Adam S. Eichenbaum, both of whom are pursuing graduate studies, his 100-year-old mother, Edith (Kahn) Eichenbaum, his brother, Jerold Eichenbaum, and sister, Miriam Eichenbaum Drop, nephews Michael Eichenbaum and Dylan Drop, and niece, Tali Eichenbaum.

"Dad was a fierce adherent to the principles of learning, and loved sharing everything he had learned throughout his life with us," Alex Eichenbaum says. "That included everything from wisdom about using memory strategies to study for a test to developing a perfectly unique pitching motion to being your own man and not letting other people tell you how to live your life."

"He opened up the world to me and encouraged me to never stop exploring," Adam Eichenbaum says.

Eichenbaum earned a BS in cell biology and a PhD in psychology at the University of Michigan and held faculty positions at Wellesley College (1977 to 1991), the University of North Carolina at Chapel H