Lewis (2008) have done. A systematic emphasis on decision-making in differing contexts, albeit challenging, appears valuable as well.

One also might compare executives within the US (and possibly other federal systems, like Australia, Canada, Germany, and Mexico); one could probe the generalizability of hypotheses from presidency research about, for instance, the impact of formal powers, evolution of staffs.

Inevitably, issues of contemporary governance occupy at least some of our attention, much as George has usefully joined conversations about the Electoral College and presidential impact on approval levels. Our scholarship raises concerns about both presidential weakness (in responding to climate change, in addressing gun control) and overreach (e.g., using the state secrets doctrine, employing drones).

Challenges remain.

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REFLECTIONS

Richard Waterman, *University of Kentucky*

For many years, historians attempted to identify the so-called "great presidents." At the recent Southern Political Science Association meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, I had the honor of serving on a panel with three of the great scholars of the American presidency: Karen Hult, William Howell, and the main subject of the panel, George Edwards. The particular focus of the panel was to remember and honor the 40th anniversary of George Edwards' seminal *APSR* article on presidential/congressional influence. In that article, Edwards not only presented an empirical analysis, he also identified the goals for a quantitative study of the American presidency. The article was an amazingly prescient work that surely encouraged other scholars to follow in George Edwards' illustrious footsteps.

Over the past forty years no one has done more to advance the quantitative study of the American presidency than George Edwards. His *APSR* article did so by demonstrating that quantitative methods could be used to examine presidential influence, as well as pointing scholars toward a new direction in the study of the American presidency. Since then, in a series of books and articles, George Edwards developed a theoretical model of the American presidency, as a facilitator-in-chief, that is both compelling and edifying. In an accomplishment that was quite rare for its time, he continued to publish research on the American presidency in top political science journals such as the *APSR*, as well as writing a highly influential series of books. In such works, Edwards has impacted scholars and officials at the very highest levels of government and created new paradigms for research in American politics.

Yet George Edwards' research, while certainly sufficient to justify a reputation as a great scholar of the American presidency, is merely the tip of the iceberg regarding his continuing influence on our profession. Over the years, as a teacher, he mentored a number of excellent graduate students who have become influential scholars in their own right. Additionally, his editorship of the *Presidential Studies Quarterly* utterly transformed that journal, making it a home for important empirical and theoretical writings on the presidency. George Edwards also has been kind and generous to young, emerging scholars. Over the years, he provided constant support and encouragement for my own work. I therefore see myself in many ways as a disciple of George Edwards.

No matter how many honors George Edwards receives, they will pale in comparison to the impact he has engendered on the study of the American presidency.

A WORD OF THANKS TO GEORGE EDWARDS

William G. Howell, *University of Chicago*

I was indebted to George Edwards long before I knew him. For me, as for so many others, George laid the groundwork for a kind of scholarship on the American presidency that now seems commonplace—one that relies on the tools, standards, and sensibilities of modern social science; and one that largely eschews personal ideology, biography, and narrative. George didn't erect the methods of social scientific inquiry. But with steadfast determination, he brought them to our subfield. And we are all better for it.

Without George, the standards and methods of modern social science still would have come to studies of the American presidency. It is difficult to see how our corner of the discipline, which for so long took pride in the deft deployment of a snappy anecdote for every observation about politics, could resist the undercurrents shaping the larger discipline. Such deterministic accounts of disciplinary change, however, overlook the controversies that can erupt along the way, just as they miss the unique contributions that individuals stand to deliver. It takes hard work and keen insight to redirect the gaze and self-understandings of a community of scholars. For decades, George offered both.

Through his scholarship, his advocacy, and his unbridled spirit, George shone a bright light on the benefits of quantitative methods for studying executive politics. He demonstrated how new datasets could be assembled and analyzed in order to reveal important new dimensions of presidential behavior. He illustrated how we might systematically evaluate claims about when presidents can advance a policy agenda, and when institutional constraints on their power keep them from doing so. He encouraged us not merely to adopt and refine inherited truths about the relevance of a president's reputation or prestige, but to carefully assess the evidentiary basis for believing them. And perhaps most consequentially, he argued against those who insisted that the presidency was fundamentally personal in nature and that, as a result, all knowledge about the subject was at once provisional and idiosyncratic.

In his pursuit of progress, George pushed against longstanding scholarly traditions and the scholars who upheld them. During the 1970s and 80s, George rose the ranks of a subfield whose power brokers had very different sensibilities about how knowledge accumulates—indeed, about what knowledge even is. Then, the foundations of presidency scholarship were built upon the testimonies of former politicos, the observations of historians, and the textual readings of constitutional law scholars. Little space was afforded to positivism; and even less for theory building and hypothesis testing.

How things have changed. Because of George and his compatriots, the field of presidency studies has been reconstituted from top to bottom. Scholarly papers on the American presidency

now—more than ever before—include long discussions on how key concepts are measured, the appropriate modeling techniques for assessing causal relations, and assessments of the sensitivity of findings. A set of conceptual issues, meanwhile, began to take hold, guiding the research trajectories of young scholars and informing disciplinary assessments of their contributions. How do we know what we think we know? What is the evidentiary basis for conventional understandings? Are we asking the right questions? Again and again, George asked these questions in his own research, and he insisted that others do the same in theirs.

public opinion is both cause and consequence of legislative activity; he characterized the various sources and kinds of measurement error associated with presidential ratings; he worried about the selection effects that plague any assessments of the correlates of presidential success in Congress; and he investigated the possibility of heterogeneous treatment effects across policies and parties.

In the decades that followed, George would go on to publish a great deal more research along these lines. His books on presidential influence in Congress, public appeals, and

During the 1970s and 80s, George rose the ranks of a subfield whose power brokers had very different sensibilities about how knowledge accumulates—indeed, about what knowledge even is.

In the wake of vigorous epistemological debates, what were once subjects of controversy become customary; and what were once viewed as stinging critiques become mere distractions. A space then opens up for new scholars (read graduate students) to attend to the substantive work at hand, which for me and my colleagues in the 1990s and 2000s centered on a host of substantive and theoretical claims about presidential power. We didn't have to defend our approaches or inclinations. George had already done that for us. Instead, we were able to set straight to the task at hand: trying to discern something new or uncover something overlooked about how presidents behave in a political system that at once exalts and confines them.

If one had to say when things began to change, one could do worse than select the date of George's first publication. Exactly forty years ago, George published what many believe to be the first major paper published in a peer-reviewed essay that uses quantitative methods to evaluate the presidency. In "Presidential Influence in the House: Presidential Prestige as a Source of Presidential Power," which appeared in the *APSR* in 1976, George subjected a longstanding claim among presidency scholars to empirical scrutiny—namely, that each president's legislative fortunes hinge upon his broader popularity. His essay is a model of careful empirical research.

Though advances in statistical techniques and computing power today allow researchers to perform more sophisticated regression analyses with ease, in that compact and trenchant essay George effectively identified the basic measurement and modeling challenges that all empirically minded presidency scholars must confront, then and now. George recognized that

strategic leadership remain required reading in undergraduate and graduate seminars across the country. George also wrote numerous essays elucidating the strengths and weaknesses of empirical research on the presidency. He held conferences in which he challenged scholars to identify and pursue new and productive inquiries into the American presidency. And for the last 15 years, he utterly transformed the subfield's flagship journal—*Presidential Studies Quarterly*—from a poorly produced gossip column into a first-class outlet featuring serious-minded original research.

George was not alone in these pursuits. A number of other prominent scholars joined his call for a more rigorous subfield—one in which claims would not be fobbed off with a wink and nod, but would be seriously interrogated. For his clear thinking, his entrepreneurialism, and, not least, his boundless energy, however, George was the driving force behind the emergence of a reconstituted subfield. He is the reason why contemporary graduate students who want to study the American presidency routinely take advanced sequences in econometrics; why subjects that were once thought impervious to quantification and analysis now attract widespread attention among empirically-minded scholars; and why the field of presidency studies is better integrated into the larger discipline than ever before.

George continues to go strong. In the last decade, he has authored or edited no fewer than seven books. His contributions, however, are not confined to the frontiers of knowledge. George Edwards leaves behind him a subfield that is at once more rigorous and more interesting than the one he joined almost a half century ago. ■

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S104909651600216X Published online by Cambridge University Press

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