

## **Jack M. Loomis - Professor Emeritus 2009**

Jack M. Loomis received a BA in Psychology from Johns Hopkins University in 1967 and a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the University of Michigan in 1971. He was a postdoctoral fellow at the Smith-Kettlewell Institute of Visual Sciences in San Francisco from 1971 to 1974.

His career was distinguished by a rare breadth of scientific interests and achievements. It began with studies of adaptation to colored light. These were followed by extensive research on recognition by touch, which established its limited capacity, but showed that otherwise it is similar to visual recognition. He made important contributions to motion perception, particularly its role in the perception of depth and three-dimensional shape. Being an avid pilot, Loomis carried out an extensive research program on the perception of space and its role in controlling action over a range of domains including flying, driving, walking, throwing, and catching. He showed the cues used and the complexity of the relation between perception and action. This led him into the field of spatial cognition where he focused on the nature and quality of the mental spatial image formed when one views a scene or when spatial information is provided in other ways. Studies of walking in darkness showed that when we move, even in darkness, our position and orientation in the space are continuously updated. Parallel studies with blind people revealed similar spatial cognition abilities.

Loomis created new methods and technology to address both scientific questions and applications to human enrichment. He was a pioneer in the development of immersive visual environment systems. He did extensive studies of auditory localization, which guided his development of an effective navigation system for the blind.

Loomis' work is characterized by creativity in the questions asked, the methods employed, and the ideas generated. A deep interest in the nature of conscious experience informed all of his research pursuits. He had great enthusiasm for science. His achievements have been internationally recognized and he was an inspiring mentor to many students and postdoctoral advisees.