

## In Memoriam

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### **Time Running Out for Family Therapy Pioneers**

Family therapy's pioneering figures predictably are disappearing at an increasing rate. As painful and regrettable as this may be for many of us, it is not surprising, given that roughly a half century has elapsed since this revolutionary approach to dealing with serious human problems began to surface in the United States. Not only is death removing pioneers from the foundational period but the field also is beginning to lose significant "second wave" researchers, theorists, and clinicians. The opening weeks of 2007 brought a profound blow as the field suffered the loss of three pioneering generation members—Lyman C. Wynne, Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, and Jay Haley—in one month and a week earlier a leading figure of the second wave—Insoo Kim Berg.

### **Representative and Significant Losses Over the Years**

The list that follows of losses from the family therapy scene in the United States prior to 2007 is illustrative rather than exhaustive; there have been others—both important and well-known contributors and still others who quietly practiced family therapy in relative obscurity, known only to small circles of persons in their own locale—who have left the field over the past few decades. The list covers losses from the East Coast foundation, the West Coast foundation, the Upper Midwest, the South, the Southwest, the Northwest, and elsewhere in the USA.

Among the major and notable losses of contributors to the founding of family therapy and second wave contributors between 1960 and 2006 were the following theorists, researchers, and clinicians:

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1968: Don D. Jackson  
1971: Nathan W. Ackerman  
1980: Gregory Bateson  
1960: Milton H. Erickson  
1984: Christian Frederick (Fritz) Midelfort  
1988: Virginia Satir  
1990: Murray Bowen  
1991: Harry Goolishian  
1992: Carolyn Attneave  
1995: John Elderkin Bell  
1995: John Weakland  
1995: Carl A. Whitaker  
1996: Edwin H. Friedman  
1997: Edgar Henry Auerswald  
1999: Neil S. Jacobson  
2001: James L. Framo  
2001: Theodore Lidz  
2002: Stephen Fleck  
2003: Margaret Thaler Singer  
2005: Steve deShazer  
2006: Marianne Walters

### **In Memoriam: Major Losses in Early 2007**

Lyman C. Wynne, MD, PhD (1923–2007)

Lyman Wynne died of cancer on January 17, 2007, in Bethesda, MD, having moved there in the last year of his life from his long time residence in the Rochester, NY area. He was born on a farm in Lake Benton, MN, in 1923. Described variously as a “a real giant in the field,” “a towering leader in the field of family therapy,” and as a “brilliant researcher, scholar, clinician, a generous mentor to so many of us,” his research not only represents a significant portion of the foundation of family therapy but it also transformed the treatment of schizophrenia. His legacy is perpetuated in part through the Wynne Center for Family Research at the University of Rochester Medical Center, endowed by Lyman and Adele Wynne in 1997. Supporting family research and training new family researchers is the mission of the Wynne Center, which is directed by Susan McDaniel, PhD.

McDaniel has described Wynne’s main contribution as using “the social environment as a support and helping treatment of severe disorders.” As early as 1947, he had the idea of treating families as a unit, even when only one member was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Wynne’s collaboration with psychologist Margaret Thaler Singer on communication deviance of parents of patients affected by schizophrenia, first published in a series of articles in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* in 1963–1965, created a new way of analyzing thought disorders. His “rigorous communication research was essential in debunking the blaming notion that a child’s early family environment...caused schizophrenia” and opened the way to guilt-free discussion about how to deal with the complex challenges this condition brings, notes Eric Cain, MD, chair of the University of Rochester Medical Center’s Department of Psychiatry. Wynne also conducted a 30 year longitudinal

study in Finland on the interaction of environment and genes in the development of schizophrenia, producing results in his collaboration with Pekka Tienari, Karl-Erik Wahlberg, and others showing that one's family environment can influence a genetic susceptibility to schizophrenia.

Lyman Wynne made the decision to become a medical researcher at age 11, when his mother was dying of cancer. He attended Harvard University on a scholarship and later was assigned by the US Army to attend Harvard Medical School during World War II, graduating with a medical degree in 1947. Work there with psychiatrist Erich Lindemann, MD, an important figure in social psychology and community health and author of significant pioneering work on grief and mourning, led to a career change for him as he became a psychiatrist and subsequently a family therapist. His first work in psychotherapy was with Lindemann, dealing with highly disorganized families including psychotic and psychosomatic members and giving attention to their "socials orbits" (Lindemann). He also participated with Lindemann in setting up the first community mental health center. In the call-up of physicians during the Korean War, Wynne was assigned by the US Public Health Service to participate in launching a new research program at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, MD. He remained there for 20 years and was chief of the adult psychiatry branch from 1961 to 1971, also serving as special consultant to the director general of the World Health Organization (Geneva, Switzerland) from 1965 to 1969. He was chair of the University of Rochester Medical Center's Department of Psychiatry 1971–1977, and served as professor of psychiatry until his retirement as emeritus professor in 1998. Following retirement he continued to publish results from the Finnish Adoption Study with Tenari. Despite his heavy research, administrative, and professional activities load, Wynne remained active as a family psychiatrist, frequently performing co-therapy with his wife, Adele, who died in 2003.

Among the many honors Lyman Wynne was awarded were the Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Award for Schizophrenia Research (1965); the Meritorious Service Medal from the US Public Health Service (1966); two awards from the American Family Therapy Academy (AFTA)—Award for Distinguished Achievement in Family Therapy Research (1981) and for Distinguished Contribution to Family Therapy Theory and Practice (1989); and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy's (AAMFT) first Cumulative Contributions to Marriage and Family Therapy Research Therapy Award (1982). He served on the board of directors of both AFTA and the AAMFT, and was president of AFTA in 1986–1987.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Adele, in 2003, and is survived by five children, five grandchildren, and a sister.

#### Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, MD (1920–2007)

Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy died January 28, 2007, at age 86, following complications from Parkinson's disease, at his home in Glenside, PA. A Hungarian-American psychiatrist and family therapist, he was born in Budapest, Hungary, May 14, 1920, into a family containing several prominent judges. He migrated to the United States in 1950. Dr. Nagy's first wife, Maria, died in 2001. He is survived by his second wife, Catherine Ducommun-Nagy, MD, who is also a psychiatrist, and by a son, Stephen, from his first marriage.

After moving to the USA, Nagy established the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute in Philadelphia in 1957, and served as co-director with social worker Geraldine Spark, remaining there for 20 years. Subsequently he headed the family therapy

department at Hahnemann University (now Drexel University), and founded a private family clinic in Ambler, PA, the Institute for Contextual Growth, which is now run by Dr. Catherine Ducommun-Nagy.

Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy developed the contextual approach to family therapy, which encourages a dialog that promotes mutual understanding and trust among family members and thus makes change possible. The contextual approach features attention to ethical dimensions of families and relationships, including fairness and justice. It specifically involves an attempt to balance the “ledger of merits and demerits” that prevail through establishing a sense of mutual responsibility. Nagy emphasized that contextual therapy is based on fairness rather than value, a lived balance in motion that oscillates between the mutual debts and merits of partners in relationships. Like others, such as Lyman Wynne and Murray Bowen, he sought to understand and work with serious mental disorders through dealing with destructive patterns of family interaction that often span several generations. Nagy determined that by working to balance ethical obligations and loyalties among family members he could improve and sometimes help to heal the symptoms brought by patients. Contextual therapy became one of the major approaches used by therapists in working with families.

*Invisible Loyalties: Reciprocity in Intergenerational Family Therapy* (1973, 1984), co-authored with Geraldine Spark, was a strong and continuing influence on the theoretical understanding and practice of large numbers of therapists. Other major and widely influential publications regarding his work were the following books: *Intensive Family Therapy: Theoretical and Practical Aspects* (1965, 1985) with James Framo; *Between Give and Take: A Clinical Guide to Contextual Therapy* (1986) with Barbara Krasner; and *Foundations of Contextual Therapy: Collected Papers of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy* (1987); and many book chapters and journal articles.

#### Jay Haley, MA (1923–2007)

Jay Haley died February 13, 2007, passing away peacefully in his sleep. One of family therapy’s best known pioneers, he was Scholar in Residence at the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University in San Diego at the time of his death. A strong figure in the evolution of the field, Haley studied and worked with other important pioneers including Gregory Bateson, Milton Erickson, and Salvador Minuchin. Students and colleagues alike praised him as a brilliant therapeutic strategist who not only was a driving force in formulating a communications model in the 1970s but also developed his own approach to brief therapy, strategic family therapy.

Haley was trained in library sciences and communication, having earned a BA degree (University of California, Los Angeles) in 1948, a BLS degree from the University of California Berkeley) in 1951, and an MA degree (Stanford University) in 1953. While Haley was working on the latter degree, Bateson invited him to join the Project for the Study of Schizophrenic Communication at the Veterans Administration Hospital and Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, that Bateson was directing. Besides Bateson, the staff included Haley and John Weakland, research associates; and Don D. Jackson and William F. Fry, consultants. It was this group that advanced the “double-bind” theory of schizophrenia. After completion of the schizophrenia communication project, Haley worked on research at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto (1962–1967). He then served as director of family research at the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic from 1967 to 1974, and contributed to bringing together aspects of strategic therapy and Minuchin’s

structural therapy. After serving as co-founder and director of the Family Therapy Institute in the Washington, DC area until his retirement in 1995, he subsequently accepted the Alliant International University appointment.

Haley's approach to therapy was strongly influenced by Milton Erickson, a master hypnotist under whose supervision he worked for several years. Haley served as the first editor of *Family Process* from 1962, when it was co-sponsored by The Mental Research Institute of the Palo Alto Medical Research Foundation and The Family Institute (now the Ackerman Institute) in New York City through 1969. He also wrote or co-authored some 20 books. These included an interpretation of Erickson's work: *Uncommon Therapy: The Psychiatric Techniques of Milton H. Erickson, MD*; *The Art of Strategic Therapy*; *The Power Tactics of Jesus Christ and Other Essays*; *Strategies of Psychotherapy*; *Problem-Solving Therapy*; *Ordeal Therapy: Unusual Ways to Change Behavior*; *Learning and Teaching Therapy*; *Changing Children and Families*; *Leaving Home*; as well as a number of audio and video cassettes and journal articles. Haley also taught at the University of Maryland, Howard University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Haley, was born July 19, 1923, in Midwest, Wyoming. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Madeleine Richeport-Haley, an anthropologist, and by three children from earlier marriage.

#### Insoo Kim Berg, MSW (1934–2007)

Insoo Kim Berg died January 10, 2007, in Milwaukee, WI, costing the family therapy field one of its most active practitioners, teachers, authors, and energetic innovators, one who consulted in a variety of settings teaching and applying Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) around the world. She worked diligently to expand the Solution-Focused concept outside of therapeutic and clinical work, continually looking for competence, strengths, and good intentions in human life from the SFBT perspective. SFBT is described as about being brief and focusing on solutions, rather than on problems. Berg was a co-developer, along with her late husband, Steve de Shazer, of the SFBT model as well as the executive director of the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee.

Born and educated in Korea, Berg came to the United State in 1957, where her daughter, Sarah was born in 1958. She earned a BS degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and in 1969 a graduate social work degree from the same university. Commuting to Chicago, she became a graduate of the Family Institute of Chicago/Center for Family Studies, and also studied group therapy at the Menninger Foundation (Topeka, KS). Attracted to the Brief Therapy Center, Mental Research Institute (Palo Alto, CA) after being impressed by the early writings of Jay Haley, she was mentored there by John Weakland and also met Steve de Shazer, whom she married in 1977.

de Shazer and Berg co-founded the Brief Therapy Center (BTC) in Milwaukee, which continues to serve as a research and training center. The term "Solution Focused Brief Therapy" was coined in 1982. Major characteristics of the approach include: eliciting of exceptions to the (client's stated) problem, the miracle question, scaling questions, relationship and coping questions, and the use of compliments. The staff at the BTC also began to include a break in the therapy session before the final summary and homework suggestion, using this whether or not there was a consulting team.

As an author, Berg published eight widely praised books in 10 years. The most recent include: *Interviewing for Solutions* (1997, 2001); *Building Solutions in Child Protective*

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*Services* (2000), and *Tales of Solutions* (2001). (Additional information on her work and publications is available on-line at <http://www.brief-therapy.org>).

Steve de Shazer preceded Insoo Kim Berg in death, passing away on September 11, 2005. Berg is survived by her daughter, Sarah Berg, one sister, three brothers, and other relatives.