

Remembering Michael Duffy, Ph.D.

I was greatly saddened to learn that Dr. Michael Duffy, age 77, had died from pulmonary fibrosis on May 10, 2020 in Canyon Lake, Texas. Michael, proud of his Irish ancestry, was born in England, the youngest of seven children. His career was long and distinguished as a counseling psychologist who significantly advanced the field of geropsychology through his teaching, mentoring, direct care of older adults, engagement in applied research and leadership in many professional organizations, including *Psychologists in Long Term Care*.

Michael began his career as a Catholic priest. His early training included the Licentiate in Theology from the Angelicum University, Rome, Italy, followed by a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology from University College, Dublin, Ireland and Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Texas in Austin.

Dr. Duffy was Professor Emeritus at Texas A&M University since 2011. During his 30 plus years of teaching he mentored numerous students, many of whom have become luminaries in geropsychology in their own right such as Bradley Karlin, Tammi Vacha-Haase and the late Royda Crose from Ball State University, to name just a few.

Michael not only taught in the classroom, but he used the long-term care setting as a real-life classroom in his practicum courses, conducting rounds on patients, similar to the model commonly used in medicine but rarely incorporated in graduate psychological training.

Other teaching roles include past Director of Training of the doctoral program in counseling psychology at Texas A&M and past Director of the Proficiency Program in Clinical Geropsychology.

Active in retirement, Dr. Duffy maintained his license in Texas and Limited-Pro Bono in Florida. He was a National Register Health Service Psychologist (USA), a Diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP), board certified in Psychology and a Chartered Psychologist (CPsychol) of the British Psychological Society. He had over 45 years of experience as a psychotherapist, specializing in psychological services with older adults since 1977. In post-retirement he offered pro bono psychotherapy to priests and trained staff in rural mental health agencies in Texas.

Dr. Duffy not only mentored graduate students but also made a concerted effort to welcome young professionals to become involved in the field of geropsychology while he was National Coordinator in the early 1980s of the fledgling organization, *Psychologists in Long Term Care* (PLTC). I know this first hand because shortly after I obtained my psychology license I searched for a professional home. Due to Michael's support, friendly collegiality and warm encouragement, I became active in PLTC. Michael and I worked on several professional projects together, including the committee chaired by Peter Lichtenberg that first developed standards of practice in long-term care over 20 years ago.

Held in high esteem by his peers is evidenced by the fact he was Past President (1996) of the Texas Psychological Association (TPA); Professor of the Year, Texas Psychological Association Division of Students in Psychology (1998); Psychologist of the Year, Texas Psychological Association (2005); and awarded by PLTC for his outstanding Contributions in 2009.

A Fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA, Divisions 17 and 29), he also has held several APA appointments: Member of the APA Committee on Aging (CONA); Vice President for Professional

Practice, APA Division of Counseling Psychology; Chair, APA Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest (BAPPI); and Liaison to the Division of Counseling Psychology of the British Psychological Society, of which he is a member, Chartered Psychologist and expatriate.

A pioneering advocate for geropsychology in numerous educational and practitioner-oriented venues, Dr. Duffy was founder and chair of the first Texas Consortium of Educators in Gerontology, served as Medicare Committee Chair for the Texas Psychological Association and Commissioner on the APA's Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology, to name just a few ways he made a visible and important difference in the field.

Michael was a prolific writer, reviewer and editor. He contributed to several noteworthy landmark initiatives including the Pikes Peak model for training in professional geropsychology and the first APA guidelines task force for psychological practice with older adults. In addition to publishing many peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters in 1999 he edited a handbook of counseling and psychotherapy with older adults that remains relevant today.

His research included the study of intergenerational family relations, geriatric crisis management, mental health in long term care; religious dimensions of psychotherapy; developmental psychotherapy; and personality styles of psychotherapists. He also developed a paraprofessional training program for providing volunteer mental health services in nursing homes (Project OASIS).

Dr. Powell Lawton shared an interest in environmental psychology with Dr. Duffy. They both studied the psychological impact of building design and in fact, Powell was a mentor to Michael and was very supportive of his research on the psychological effects of nursing home design.

Clearly Dr. Duffy has not only contributed to but also helped to shaped the field of geropsychology by his tireless groundbreaking and pioneering work. He will be sadly missed by his many colleagues and friends and his immediate family members, wife Jo Ann and three children, Sara Michelle, Claire Marie who is a psychologist, and Andrew Justin.

From my personal encounters with Michael over 35 years, I will remember his unique combination of a gentle, peaceful countenance, generosity, political acumen, deep spirituality and wry British wit.

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