



Irving Lazar

February 20, 1926 – May 1, 2012

Irving Lazar Ph.D. died peacefully on May 1, 2012. Born to Charles and Sylvia Lazarowitz on February 20, 1926 in NYC. He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Dr. Jules M. Marquart who earned her Ph.D. from Cornell; children, Kathryn, Jim, Richard; 3 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren, and 2 sisters. A veteran of WWII, Dr. Lazar obtained his B.S. at City College of New York, and M.A. and Ph.D. in psychology from Columbia University, and completed an internship at the Menninger Clinic. His distinguished professional career focused on improving the lives of children and families, in the United States and abroad, through teaching, research, and program and policy development. In the 1950s-60s, Dr. Lazar served as the associate commissioner of mental health in Nevada; a reserve officer in the U.S. Public Health Service in Washington, DC; founder and executive director of the Peterson-Guedel Family Therapy Center in L.A.; and executive director of the Neumeyer Foundation in L.A. He also served as a consultant to the US Office of Economic Opportunity on the development and evaluation of Head Start and community action agencies as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty. In the 1970s and the 1980s Dr. Lazar directed a national evaluation of headstart, publishing the results in a widely recognized book "As the Twig is Bent" which was able to verify the extent of Headstart's benefits for underprivileged children. He was the Associate Director of the Appalachian Regional Commission in Washington from 1970-72. From 1972-1991, he returned to academic life as a professor and chair of the Department of Human Service Studies at Cornell University, during which time he also served as the Coordinator of the Sloan Program in Health Administration after it moved from the Business School to Human Ecology. Professor Lazar retired as Professor Emeritus in 1991. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the Division of Early Childhood of the Council on Exceptional Children in 1984. In Nashville, he was a resident scholar at the Kennedy Center for Research in Human Development, and served on numerous community boards. In the mid-1990s, Dr. Lazar served on the external faculty of the Santa Fe Institute, where he applied complexity theory to the infant as a complex, adaptive system.

Dr. Lazar may be best known for founding and directing the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies in the 1970s, a group of 11 academic researchers who collaborated in conducting long-term follow-up of their participants from preschool into adolescence and pooling their data in a prototype of meta-analysis. Through Dr. Lazar's widespread dissemination of findings to Congress and in over 40 states, study results were used to help save Head Start funding and to increase early childhood program funding in states. Professor Lazar did considerable international consulting and speaking, especially in New Zealand, Europe, Canada, Japan, Thailand, Hong Kong, and India. He and Dr. Marquart worked with Dr. Joan Bergstrom of Wheelock College, on a United Nations Development Program project in Singapore from 1988- 91 to develop policy, training and evaluation of its national child care system. He was also a research fellow in the Population Institute at the East West Center in Hawaii.

Andrea Parrot, Chairperson; Bettie Lee Yerka