

In Memoriam: Abraham W. Wolf, Ph.D.

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Although *mensch* has been a callously overused term, its original meaning as a person of integrity and honor perfectly characterizes Abe Wolf, whose noble character enriched those around him and the field of psychotherapy. Sadly, he died on February 28, 2019 after courageously battling cancer. We join thousands of his colleagues and clients in mourning his death and in celebrating his life.

If one's legacy lies in the cumulative impact on fellow humans, then Abe's remains immortal. Among his colleagues emailed comments were "I am better for having known Abe," "Abe was an incredibly lovely man and I have many warm memories of him," and "I feel that one of my greatest professional achievements is that I somehow had earned the respect of Abe." A recurrent theme was that Abe naturally made us feel good about ourselves and our profession. One colleague observed, "One glowing light that shined and still shines brightly through both his personal and professional life was his wise counsel and ability to make someone else feel good. It feels good to pay tribute to Abe in the same way he made us feel good about ourselves!" Exactly so.

Abe was a highly respected therapist and proved the consummate professional. Those who knew him were thoroughly impressed with his devotion to his clients. During his final weeks, as he battled his cancer, Abe continued to meet with his patients, even though he required a walker and oxygen. He cared deeply for his patients, family, and colleagues.

Abe proved a treasured friend and colleague in his adopted city of Cleveland and in several international organizations. He was a genuine triple threat as clinician, researcher, and educator. We experienced Abe, to borrow a phrase from Duke Ellington, as "beyond category"—high praise for artists who transcend theoretical boundaries.

Abe's 40-year affiliation with Case Western Reserve University enabled him to contribute in all the professional

activities of a scientist-practitioner. He was a gifted teacher, sharing his expertise as a psychodynamic therapist and with his work on item response theory in psychotherapy outcome. He was the consummate instructor: well informed, up-to-date, and collaborative. His co-edited book on *Transforming negative reactions to clients: From frustration to compassion*, his guest editing one of the earliest journal issues on technology in psychotherapy, and his influential research on the effects of lead and iron on child development convey the impressive range of his scholarship and intellect.

Abe proved of immense service to Case Western throughout the decades. He served on dozens of committees for his department, hospital, and medical school. Abe proved a generous benefactor to the doctoral program in clinical psychology: He donated funds to start an endowment to support research on psychotherapy and later he donated a second set of funds to create an endowment for a fifth-year graduate student in clinical psychology. He retired as Professor Emeritus of Psychology in Psychiatry at Case Western.

One of Abe's service priorities was the APA Division of Psychotherapy (now the Society for the Advancement of Psychotherapy). He chaired its Student Development Committee, served on the Publication Board, worked as the internet editor, and was elected both to the Board of Directors and as Treasurer. In 2006, he was President of the association. Abe was a vibrant presence and valued contributor to the organization for more than 20 years. In a word, a *mensch*.

Abe particularly advanced the synthesis of practice and research as well as the integration of psychotherapies. These passions were evidenced in his reviewing manuscripts for a dozen journals, directing APA's first online psychotherapy academy, and serving as program chair for the Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration (SEPI). Abe will be honored at the 2019 SEPI conference focused on "Building Alliances" for having done so in multiple facets of his life.

Those who would like to honor his memory may contribute to the Abraham W. Wolf, Ph.D., Endowed Fund for Graduate Fellowship in Clinical Psychology, c/o Case Western Reserve University, 10900 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44106.

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