

Dr. Sydney Margolin was an interesting and complex person. Brilliant and aggressive, he expected a great deal of himself—and those around him. As a result, he represented many different things to different people. He was a man of contrasting moods, diverse interests, and paradoxical perspectives. His physical presence was commanding, his voice was hypnotically resonant, and his bearing was serious, intense, and professional.

Sydney's professional career work and accomplishments speak for themselves. His early work was deeply rooted in traditional psychoanalysis with an individual intrapsychic focus. Then, through the agency of psychoanalytic method and hypnotic techniques, he delved deep into psychosomatic medicine research, where his name became associated with concepts of physiologic regression in maladaptive response to stress and anaclitic therapy. Finally, through his work with American Indians and Hispanics, he opened the range of his interests and studies to include sociocultural determinants of behavior, and he speculated on methods of intervention.

In his clinical work with individual patients, Sydney had the uncanny ability to observe and understand things that others just noticed. Residents valued these "pearls" and sought his guidance in this regard. At the same time, he had the annoying habit, both with students and colleagues, of candidly saying exactly what he thought. This habit, combined with his reluctance to engage in some of the other social and fraternal dances of academia, sometimes lead to his being perceived as something of a maverick.

Dr. Margolin's custom of poking at the boundaries of convention and the accepted idiom were reflected in his work in other ways. He insisted that his students define their terms and refused to allow them retreat into the convenience of psychoanalytic jargon. He encouraged them to read original source materials and historic papers, believing that the phenomenologic case descriptions of pioneers in the field—Freud, Bleuler, Krapaelin, etc.—were fuller, richer, and more accurate than contemporary writers whom he suspected of trying to fit clinical data into preconceived diagnostic categories.

One of the essential themes in Sydney's life and work was the notion that the reality and life of patients and their problems were richer, more interesting, and more complex than could be encompassed or defined by any theoretical framework. Psychoanalysis provided merely the methods and tools for exploring the uncharted regions of human psychological experience and behavior.

Sydney felt strongly about keeping psychiatry and psychoanalysis firmly anchored in medical physiology; hence, his Human Behavior Laboratory. His laboratory was filled with polygraphs, videotape and sound equipment, and other sophisticated electronic gadgetry.

Sydney had an intense curiosity about unusual people and unique human problems. Individuals suffering stigmatism, various phobias, disturbing dissociative phenomena, and multiple personality were among those case studies that he had videotaped.

He was interested in the roots of healing processes and experience in the human psyche. He acknowledged historical kinship with priests and shamans of other cultures. He sought to appreciate the humanity beneath priests' vestments and shamans' masks. In this way, he honored the healing traditions of American Indians.

In his work with American Indians, Sydney was appreciated as "a man with a good heart." He seemed to present his best self—gracious, generous, and kind—in the honest, unpretentious environs of the reservation, away from the competitive complexities of the "civilized" academic community.

In and around the academic community, Sydney wore his professional demeanor most of the time, seldom letting go the more personal side of his nature. At home with his devoted wife, child psychiatrist/psychoanalyst, Gretel Hitchman, MD, he showed a more relaxed, personal side. Also, classical music and travel seemed to allow for the emergence of his more personal self.

Sadly, Sydney never completed the books he had expressed ambition to write. His proposed books on hypnosis, psychosomatic medicine, and ethnopsychiatry never materialized. Sydney's health failed him in the last years of his life.

The writers of the articles contained herein—Frank Tikalsky, PhD, Robert Putsch, MD, and John K. Nagel, MD—were all greatly influenced personally and professionally by Dr. Margolin. Others, including child psychiatrist, Bill Stennis, MD, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, MD, were among those encouraged and inspired by Sydney Margolin's influence. This edition of the *Journal of the National Center* is dedicated in gratitude to Sydney's memory and inspiration.

John K. Nagel, MD  
Guest Editor



Sydney G. Margolin, MD, Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, died December 3, 1985 at his home after a prolonged siege with hepatitis and liver cancer. He was 76, having continued his active psychoanalytic practice until just a few months before his death. He was director of the medical school's Human Behavior Laboratory from 1955 to 1979. Prior to that he was Associate Psychiatrist in charge

of Inpatient Services and Psychiatric Liaison Service between 1946 and 1955. He acted as United States Armed Services Consultant Neuropsychiatrist to the Surgeon General in World War II and afterward from 1944 to 1955. He completed his undergraduate studies at Columbia University in 1929 and attended New York State University Medical School graduating MD in 1936. After medical school he did his internship and neurology residency at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City from 1936 to 1940. He was honored as Abrahamson Research Fellow and Josiah Macy Foundation Research Fellow in 1941 and 1942. Dr. Margolin was well known for his contributions in the area of psychosomatic medicine. His interest and research in the psychophysiology of psychosomatic illnesses remained one of the central themes of his life's work. In Colorado he became fascinated with ethnopsychiatry through his work with Hispanic and American Indian populations. His passion for the Southwest was evident in his active support of the development of a Southwest Studies Center at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. He had a long-standing interest in natural history of psychoanalysis and its confluence of historical, sociological, and cultural conditions with Freud's destiny. Dr. Margolin and his wife, child psychoanalyst, Gretel Hitchman, MD, enjoyed many friends and acquaintances in both American and international psychoanalytic communities. Dr. Margolin's professional contributions include 50 years of teaching medical students as well as many papers and presentations which emerged from his vast clinical experience and research. What he stimulated and provoked in his students, residents, and fellows may stand as his most appreciated accomplishment.

I am glad to have been asked to add a few words to the Memorial Journal. I am grateful to Dr. Spero Manson for generating the idea of publishing articles written by friends and colleagues of Sydney. Drs. Nagel, Putsch, and Tikalsky were all close co-workers and they have contributed material that would have been of great interest to Sydney. I want to thank them deeply for their effort and time spent. Their contributions will enhance our memory of Sydney—researcher, teacher, and friend.

Gretel Hitchman Margolin, MD