

Remembering Dr. Gary Kielhofner



Gary Kielhofner was a remarkable man, a visionary, a passionate scholar. As a beginning scholar, over 30 years ago, he had a dream of advancing the field of occupational therapy in order to assist individuals with chronic health conditions and disability live fulfilling and satisfying lives. His dream became a reality when he crafted the Model of Human Occupation, also known as MOHO. Gary's work has inspired and impacted the lives of thousands and thousands of therapists, students, clients and colleagues. He made history, broke ground and shaped the future of the profession. He shared a unique sense of pride when mentoring students and colleagues, bringing out the best in them. As a visionary, he thought of a world of peace, in which social justice reigns and individuals' occupational performance needs are met. With his vision and diligent dedication to the field of occupational therapy he built the department of occupational therapy at UIC to become one of the best programs in the world, widely recognized for its research enterprise and internationally appraised as the hub where new developments are happening.

Gary was a scholar of many accomplishments. In 1975 He obtained his Master's degree in Occupational Therapy from the University of Southern California followed by a doctoral degree in 1980 in Public Health, from the University of California, Los Angeles. Following faculty positions at Virginia Commonwealth University and Boston University, he moved to Chicago in 1986 to become the head of the Department of Occupational Therapy at UIC, a job he held for 20 years. He was instrumental in the creation of the PhD in Disability Studies at UIC and led the development of the clinical Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree. Gary was a prolific writer. He published his first book in 1983 and since then he published 19 books and over 140 articles in professional journals. He and his team of students and colleagues have authored thirteen assessments that are used around the world in all areas of practice. His work has been recognized nationally and internationally in many ways with honours and accolades. He was the UIC Wade/Meyer Endowed Chair since 2000, guest professor at Linköping University in Sweden, elected Professor of the Year in 2009 by the UIC College of Applied Health Sciences, selected for the prestigious UIC University Scholar award in 2004, the recipient of three honorary doctorate degrees - one from Queen Margaret University in Scotland, one from University of the Health Sciences in Pennsylvania, and one from Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm. Gary's accomplishments were too many to enumerate them all.

His work will continue and persevere for generations to come, as he changed the way we think and conduct research, the way we conceive occupation and the way we help clients live fulfilling lives. His passion for education, research and service made of his students, mentees and trainees compassionate and caring therapists who are now contributing to advancing tomorrow's practice. He was a servant to others; yet always thinking about "tomorrow." Ready to assist his colleagues when needed, share his wisdom, and work for the common good, whether for the department, college, campus, and the OT profession nationally or internationally. Gary impacted all of our lives. He planted seeds everywhere he went and touched thousands of lives through his books, published articles, assessments and manuals, & speaking engagements. He provided the fire for others to create for themselves, be inspired, and take part in new endeavours. As we look into the future we are committed to continuing his legacy and promoting his work, The Model of Human Occupation.

We will miss you, Gary.

You can honour Dr. Gary Kielhofner in 2 ways:

1) Model of Human Occupation Research & Scholarship Fund

Checks should be made out to the University of Illinois Foundation with MOHO in the memo line.

Send to:

University of Illinois Foundation
1305 W. Green Street, MC 386
Urbana, IL 61801

Credit card donations can be made at

<http://tigger.uic.edu/debts/development/giving/StartGivingUIC.html>

2) The Mercy Foundation Hospice Fund.

Checks should be made out to the Mercy Foundation with Gary Kielhofner in the memo line.

Send to:

The Mercy Foundation
2525 S. Michigan Avenue, Room 240F
Chicago, IL 60616