



IN MEMORIAM Abel Fink

by Adam Blatner

Abel K. Fink, EdD, TEP (Aug. 5, 1927 – Jan. 20, 2015) age 87 received the ASGPP J.L. Moreno Lifetime Achievement Award in 1996.

Born in Rockaway Beach, Queens, Dr. Fink graduated from Far Rockaway High School in 1944. Though he first went to college to study engineering, he changed his major to psychology when he realized his efforts would be used to promote war. A lifelong pacifist, Dr. Fink earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Brooklyn College in 1948 and completed his graduate work at Teachers College, Columbia University, earning a master's degree in educational psychology in 1950 and a doctor of education degree in 1956. After that, Dr. Fink received a PhD in Education from Columbia University and from there in 1958 he became a professor at Buffalo State College. He also studied human relations at the National Training Laboratory, Bethel, Maine.

In the 1960s, after seeking training at the Moreno Academy in Beacon, New York, Dr. Fink taught courses on psychodrama, sociodrama, and group dynamics. He published four papers in our journal between 1960 and 1968. Dr. Fink was also an active leader in a number of community groups involving psychology, interfaith discussions, literature and peace.

A longtime North Buffalo resident, Dr. Fink was a professor of psychology at Buffalo State from 1956 to 1995. He taught classes in psychology, human growth and development, human relations, group dynamics, sociodrama and role playing. He was at the forefront of the progressive education movement that focused on student-centered learning. In his classes, Dr. Fink taught students to learn about groups through their direct experiences instead of



from a textbook. He is the author of the book, "Students Speak," published by Buffalo State in 2010.

He was recipient of several awards, including the United Jewish Federation of Buffalo Service Award in 1977, and Distinguished Career Award from Phi Delta Kappa, Buffalo Chapter, in 2013.

He was an active member of the American Psychological Society, Psychotherapy Association of Western New York, Buffalo Jewish Center's young adult service committee, Jewish Family

Service, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, Greater Buffalo Memorial Society, American Society for Group Psychotherapy, American Board of Examiners, Citizens Council on Human Relations, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Buffalo Torch Club, Phi Delta Kappa, Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Network of Religious Communities of Western New York, Unitarian Universalist Church, Dickens Fellowship and Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

He enjoyed opera and Buffalo Philharmonic concerts, and was a lifelong swimmer and daily reader of the New York Times. Though Jewish, Dr. Fink believed in the universality of religion and attended both Jewish and Christian services.

Background:

Dr. Fink was a family man, with a number of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In addition, he was a loving partner to Jane Pangallo for 18 years.