



IN MEMORIAM Donell Miller

by Adam Blatner

Donell Miller, MDiv, PhD, TEP, LMFT, (10/1/26-12/31/14) died recently after a long and distinguished career of 53 years' involvement with psychodrama. He was one of the late second-generation of pioneers in our field. A certified trainer of psychodrama (a TEP), Don was active in many other ways. He was recognized with the ASGPP Hannah Weiner Award in 2001. In part, this was because he managed the "Beacon House Reminders" at the Horsham clinic, in Ambler, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia. This psychiatric treatment center in the late 1970s was the main location of Moreno's publications in the years following Moreno's passing. (Subsequently, the publication of the ASGPP's Journal was then taken over by Heldref, who published many other small journals. This continued through around 2006.) For this and many other contributions, Don was also given a President's Award by the ASGPP in 2012.

Don was also a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), an ordained Methodist minister (MDiv), a clinical psychologist (PhD), and a college professor. He trained with and knew J.L. & Zerka Moreno. Don wrote many non-fiction and fiction books, privately produced (noted on Blatner's book list online), such as a monography titled *Action Methods for Spiritual Growth* as well as a number of fictional stories—often with an allusion to psychodrama.

More recently he's worked with Jon Kirby in Los Angeles on Spirituality and Culture, and has done some psychodrama training at the University United Methodist Church in Redlands (which is where he lived, east of LA).

Background:

He received a BS in Psychology and Sociology in 1948 from the University of Washington in Seattle. He then studied for a MDiv at Yale University, majoring not only in religion but also in personality development. That was in 1952, while also attending Trinity College in Hartford, CT and earning an MA in general psychology and anthropology. Continuing study was at Louisiana State University in 1956, where he obtained his PhD in Clinical Psychology.

From there he moved to St. Louis and the nearby region, where he conducted a private practice, worked at the St. Louis State Hospital—and learned about psychodrama from Leon "Lee" Fine. He became the Chief of Clinical Psychology Unit there (1963-67) and then the Chief Psychologist at their Youth Center from 1967-69. During that time Don also went back and forth to Beacon to take psychodrama training, finally being recognized by Moreno as a "director" in 1969.

While in St. Louis, Donnell worked at several venues: as a counselor at the Pastoral Institute, from 1963-69; as a part-time instructor at Washington University, giving classes



on St. Louis, MO, Part-time Instructor, Social Psychology & Personality Theory, 1965-69. Private Practice in Psychotherapy, Webster Groves, MO 1965-69.

Nearby, in Eden Seminary, Webster Groves, Missouri, Don worked as a part-time psychodramatist & instructor on Personality Theory (1963-69); worked as the Head of the Psychology Department at Evansville University, 1957-62.

Other roles include:

- Southeast Louisiana Hospital, Clinical Psychology Fellow, 1953-56.
- Connecticut School for Boys, Meriden CT, Assistant Clinical Psychologist, 1950-52. Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis MO.

Thereafter he moved to near Philadelphia, where he helped receive the Beacon Publications library after the international institute at Beacon—Moreno's home—closed. He worked at the Horsham Clinic and founded the Philadelphia Psychodrama Institute, where he treated adults and youth, 1985-1994. (It was called the "Beacon House" Horsham Clinic, Manager in 1990, and Director in 1992.)

He also held a staff appointment at Patton State Hospital in San Bernadino, California, as a part-time Staff Psychologist, between 1970-85.

In 1995 he moved to Southern California and settled into his faculty role(s) there, also writing and publishing books. He conducted psychodrama Workshops in Philadelphia and West Covina, and also worked overseas—Australia, New Zealand (Sydney and Auckland Medical Schools), Germany (Munster and Svisten Hospitals).

In 1995 opened Beacon Book Reminders in California; renamed it "Beacon Reminders" in 1999. Dr. Miller was active to the end, teaching classes.

Teaching:

A wide variety of Graduate and Undergraduate courses: Personality theories, Social psychology, Abnormal psychology, Counseling, Introduction to psychotherapy, Psychology of Religion, Experimental psychology (research design), Group psychotherapy, Family therapy, Exceptional children, Creative Writing, Motivation and Emotions, The Mystery Story, History and Systems, Opera Appreciation, Clinical psychology, Psychological testing, Projective techniques, Great books, Applied psychology, Bible (at Methodist District Conference and various churches), Seminars on Existentialism and Phenomenology, Culture and Personality, Language and Thought, The Self, Psychoanalysis, Philosophy of Science, Theater of Spontaneity, Directing for Theater

