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Tribute Celebrating Hiram Fitzgerald: Forty years with Infant Mental: A lens from USA

By Joy Osofsky, Past President of WAIMH, Professor of Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Public Health Head, Division of Pediatric Mental Health, Barbara Lemann Professorship of Child Welfare, New Orleans, USA

It is both an honor and a pleasure to share my thoughts about Hiram (Hi) Fitzgerald. Hi is not only a pioneer and major leader in the infant mental health field, but also, he is also a very special person. While we had known each other for many years, those who read this tribute may not know that my first major endeavor with Hi Fitzgerald was to collaborate to create the World Association for Infant Mental Health (WAIMH) which resulted from a merger of the World Association for Infant Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines with the International Association for Infant Mental Health. It was a wonderful

collaboration where we both assumed leadership for the newly established organization with me as President and Hi as Executive Director. I very much enjoyed this period of time working and collaborating with Hi helping to build the field that is now widely recognized as Infant Mental Health because of his skill, finesse, great problem-solving ability and clear direction, all of which were important to move forward. While the work was hard with frequent challenges, it was an exciting joint adventure together with the international Board of Directors in broadening the perspective of WAIMH into a truly multidisciplinary international organization.

I am sure that those who know and have worked with Hi understand what a pleasure it is to be able to call him a close colleague, fine collaborator, and warm friend. I learned quickly that we share a similar style of working, that is, being available most of the time, responding quickly to correspondence, emails and phone calls, and believing that even very challenging situations coming from different cultural perspectives are solvable. In other words, Hi and I agree with the adage that if you need something to be done quickly and well, you should turn it over to a very busy and competent person. I will share a brief story related to my respect for Hi in problem solving that required an immediate and creative response. I was editor of the *Infant Mental Health Journal* at the time that Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans on August 29, 2005 with the breach of the levees. Fortunately, the IMHJ office then located with the editor just sent an issue to press in mid-August. In 2005, we still had paper files for the Journal, all of which were then sitting in our filing cabinets on the 3rd floor of my flooded and deserted office building in the flooded city. It was impossible to retrieve the files in New Orleans so Hi and I started to “problem-solve” and figure out how we could retrieve submissions, those that were under review, and start to digitize the journal. Somehow, with Hi’s ingenuity, hard work, and again awesome collaboration, we accomplished that work before the next issue was due to go to press! How we did it would not have been possible without Hi’s persistence and resourcefulness – and true collaboration!

I am confident that those of you who know Hi will agree that he is a very accomplished psychologist, academician, researcher, teacher, and administrator. While his many professional accomplishments are well respected, I have also very much admired his commitment to his family as a devoted husband, father and grandfather who has always been very involved with family

life, taking much pride in his children and grandchildren, and sharing his love of family with others. I was extremely impressed and touched that as Hi decided to begin a new chapter in his life, his family established the Hiram E. Fitzgerald Engaged Scholar Endowment Fund to help students carry out work that “transforms the human experience.” I am very fortunate to have Hi Fitzgerald as a wonderful collaborator and friend, and I join my WAIMH colleagues and friends in wishing him much satisfaction and pleasure in the next important phase of his life.

Tribute Celebrating Hiram Fitzgerald: Forty years with Infant Mental: A lens from Australia

By Rochelle Matacz (Clinical Psychologist, IMH Specialist (IMH-E[®]) and Lynn Priddis (Clinical and Counselling Psychologist), Perth, Australia

Hiram Fitzgerald,

Leaped into our lives with his larger than life presence at a time when our university was looking for overseas professors to build research capacity.

I had of course seen Hiram from afar at WAIMH congresses on panels with people whose names were all stars to us. Rochelle had spent time with Hiram in Ireland as he helped establish the Irish Affiliation of IMH and was a keynote speaker of Ireland’s inaugural conference on IMH in 2006. When we considered who to bring out to Australia to help build a research profile in PIMH we sought advice from Debbie Weatherston who without hesitation, immediately recommended Hiram. We proceeded to set about investigating the university systems and processes required to support this if indeed it became a reality and not just a fantasy. Together Rochelle and I bravely sent an invitation to Hi to visit the university for three months and to do this for 2 consecutive years, since in Australia we have a plethora of people who fly in and fly out and leave little impact or

follow up. We were not sure what changes or developments would come from our time together with Hi but in true Hiram fashion he transformed our perspectives and the way we approach the field of IMH in so many ways we never imagined possible prior to his visit.

Hiram arrived with his wife Dee and from the beginning shook us out of our comfort zones. There were a few minor cultural issues to get our heads around such as Hiram's persistence in calling our beautiful red flowering red "Bottle Brush" bush the "Pipe Cleaner" tree. More significantly was his way of viewing the responsibilities that universities have to community and his systematic perspective to improving the lives of vulnerable infants, young children and their families. He guided and shaped our understanding of the significant role the entire system plays in supports families transitioning into parenthood.

Hiram questioned why our focus was on one small part of the system rather than a much broader, holistic perspective that would engage stakeholders across the continuum of care and hold the views and experiences of families at the centre of everything we do in the field. Initially, Rochelle and I talked with Hi about how he might support us to develop a research framework that captured the positive changes in families and the clinical significance of the PIMH intervention work carried out in the newly established university based Pregnancy to Parenthood clinic. We also considered that Hiram might help build awareness of IMH in other areas of the university such as Education and Nursing and Midwifery as well as our Psychology Department.

Well, Hi's first questions to us were "what is the point of evaluating one clinic that has an isolated impact?" How will that change anything across the system and impact more than the 50 families you treat each year? "What is the system of care your clinic sits within and how does it currently function?" What does your clinic offer in relation to improving the system that supports families with infants and young children? We were lost for words and didn't know how to respond to Hiram's direct questions as our perspective up until this point had been primarily focused on building an evidence base for the service we were providing families which we valued and felt pride in delivering within the community.

After we took a few breaths and reflected deeply about Hiram's provocative questions we began to understand the field of PIMH from a new broader perspective. The questions Hiram posed enabled us to develop clarity about what

we needed to do and how to proceed which was different to what we had ever imagined. Our minds opened and our perspectives changed. We shifted our focus and commitment to developing a deep understanding of our system and all its complexities and how we might offer interventions that improve the functioning of the system and the family's experiences across the continuum of care. It didn't take long for us to wonder how we could have not taken this approach prior to Hiram's visit. We both feel that this experience exemplifies the impact of Hi's presence. He had the capacity to dramatically shift our perspective towards a direction that will provide a much larger impact on vulnerable families than our isolated service provision could ever offer.

With Hiram's guidance we developed a proposal, and to our surprise received a large grant to conduct a system analysis of the local PIMH system of Care. He has supported us at every stage of the process and with persistence we have now produced a report that has the potential to be so impactful on the wider PIMH system of care and be used as an exemplar for system evaluation and change at a state and federal level.

At all stages of this journey Hiram has generously provided us with his wisdom, expertise and knowledge. His input has transformed how we see ourselves and our capacity to make real and impactful long-term sustainable changes to the emotional lives of infants, young children and their families. It has given us renewed strength and courage to persist with these innovative ways of working from a systems-based approach that our Western Australian system has yet to fully understand. Hiram embodies 'relationship-based work' and has become one of our secure bases that is always available for support, advice, or guidance when things become tricky or overwhelming. He has an amazing capacity to ground us and help keep us focused when we are confronted with barriers or unexpected challenges.

Rochelle had the opportunity to visit Hiram and Dee in East Lansing last year and witness his local work. For the first time she was able to come to terms with the enormity of what Hiram has created at Michigan State University and how his impact stretches way beyond the field of infant mental health and beyond the USA all the way to the Perth, the third most isolated city in the world! We also know that his impact stretches to many other parts of the world.

Acknowledging Hiram also comes with recognition of a very important partner and influencer behind the scenes-known

fondly by everyone as 'Dee'. During their time in Australia and Rochelle's visit to Michigan we were able to have many moments of fun together with Hiram and Dee. We shared laughs and got to see the less serious side of Hiram with time spent away from work and with more of a focus on good food and wine, always finishing the night with a night cap of Irish whiskey!!

Tribute Celebrating Hiram Fitzgerald: Forty years with Infant Mental: A lens from Finland

By Kaija Puura, WAIMH Executive Director, Tampere, Finland

In this issue of the Perspectives we celebrate our colleague and friend, Professor Hiram Fitzgerald. Hiram Fitzgerald – or Hi as many of us call him - has had a magnificent academic career and been a significant and central person in WAIMH over the years as one of its founders, as the WAIMH Board President, as the Executive Director, and now, as one of the Honorary Presidents.

I first met Hi in June 1995 when we were preparing for the WAIMH 1996 Tampere Congress and the Board of Directors of WAIMH came to Finland for its meeting and site visit. At that time, I was working as the secretary of the Local Organizing Committee, and in that role, I had the privilege of also meeting Hi's wife, Dolores Fitzgerald – or Dee as she was known, another important person working for WAIMH. I could hardly guess that 10 years later I would be working with Hi, helping to organize WAIMH World Congresses as the Associate Executive Director of WAIMH. Hi was great to work with; no question I asked was too stupid; no detail too small; and, he did not hesitate to give constructive feedback. I also remember having many evenings with lots of fun with Hi and Dee, either "talking shop" or just joking about funny happenings in our lives.