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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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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<sup>®</sup>) 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