

Alexander Grinstein, M.D Psychoanalyst, Humanist, Optimist

Alexander Grinstein M.D died on Tuesday, December 11, after a brief illness, at the age of 89. We mourn the loss of one of our esteemed colleagues ---- a loss to psychoanalysis, to his family and to all of us who had the privilege of knowing him. He was the devoted husband of Adele, father of Richard and his wife Nancy, David and his wife Christina , and the proud grandfather of 5.

A well-known Freud scholar and a prolific writer and researcher, with a strong interest in literature and applied psychoanalysis, he achieved prominence in the psychoanalytic world both nationally and internationally. Born in Russia, he came with his parents to Buffalo, New York at the age of five. Both of his parents were physicians. He received his BA and MD from the University of Buffalo, and moved to Detroit, Michigan in 1942, where he underwent psychoanalytic training. He helped establish psychoanalytic education in Michigan where he- became a highly sought- after analyst and teacher, known for his empathy, sensitivity and flexibility.

Alex Grinstein was a central leader and major educator in the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute for more than 50 years. He was twice the President of the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute and Chairman of the Educational Committee, a founding member of the Michigan Psychoanalytic Foundation; Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Wayne State University in Detroit and a past president of the Sigmund Freud Archives in New York. A popular lecturer who was compelling and engaging, he actively mentored several generations of psychoanalysts and students who have been influenced by his humanistic interests and ideals as well as his scholarly productivity.

Dreams and symbolism were a special interest of his and early in his career, he published a series of articles covering many topics, including the dream symbolism of the convertible, fire and its meanings and character types. He compiled the Index of Psychoanalytic Writings, which, before the Internet, was the only way to do research in the field. Alex co-authored a book on family dynamics with Editha Sterba in an attempt to extend the insights of psychoanalysis and make them available to the general public. He was the author of numerous psychoanalytic books -- including On Sigmund Freud's Dreams, Freud at the Crossroads, Conrad Ferdinand Meyer and Freud, and Freud's Rules of Dream Interpretation. He also wrote psychoanalytic studies of Beatrix Potter, Willkie Collins, Oscar Wilde, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Edwin Arlington Robinson. His wife Adele worked closely with him on all of his publications.

His children say that every time he finished writing a book he would promise Adele that he would not write another book , and the next week he was already starting another one.

In addition to the pleasure and satisfaction he had from doing research, he had many hobbies to which he devoted much time. Music played a central role in his life—he started lessons as a child and practiced violin every evening almost until the very last day of his life. He and Adele played piano and violin duets together. He enjoyed chamber music , symphony and opera , art and antiquities.

Alex and his family loved horseback riding and he owned a number of horses over the years. He took great pleasure in caring for the horses. Every summer, he transported

the horses to his summer place in upstate New York, where the family rode on trails that Alex and his sons had made. During the rest of the year, they rode in the Detroit area where he kept the horses. He was also an inveterate hiker on the trails.

. Alex was a genuinely optimistic person who was enthusiastic about psychoanalysis, and the progress and successes of his students, patients, colleagues and friends. For those of us who came to know him and spend time with him, we found that he was a raconteur with a great sense of humor—and he loved good food.

. His warmth, generosity and élan along with his dedication and steadiness will be deeply missed by the psychoanalytic community as well as the community at large. On a more personal note, he became a good friend, mentor and encouraging supporter to me in my professional life for which I am grateful.

We bid farewell to this eminent clinician, scholar and teacher who was always an optimist. We will remember him with admiration, affection and gratitude.

Deanna Holtzman, PH.D.

An Alexander Grinstein Memorial Fund has been established which will be used for interdisciplinary and applied psychoanalytic educational projects to honor Dr. Grinstein who had major interests in this area. Contributions may be sent to The Alexander Grinstein Memorial Fund c/o The Michigan Psychoanalytic Foundation, 32841 Middlebelt Road, Suite 411, Farmington Hills, Mi 48334, USA.