

The Society for Humanistic Psychology, Division 32, proudly announces the *Mike Arons and E. Mark Stern Award for Outstanding Lifetime Service to the Society for Humanistic Psychology*. This award, given in tribute to Drs. Myron Milford “Mike” Arons and E. Mark Stern, its first recipients in 2008, is presented to an individual, who has throughout their career, given sustained loyalty to the Society.

Dr. Mike M. Arons, PhD (1929-2008) beloved teacher, mentor, and friend to generations of students and colleagues was professor emeritus, chair, and founder of the Humanistic Psychology Department at the State University of West Georgia (UWG) from 1968-2000. After graduating from Wayne State University in 1961 with a degree in psychology, he earned a doctorate on the subject of creativity research at the Sorbonne in Paris where he worked with Paul Ricoeur in phenomenology and hermeneutics. He then returned to the US to continue post-graduate studies at Brandeis University with Abraham Maslow, George Kelly, and Jim Klee.

A brilliant psychologist, philosopher, and existentialist, Mike has been recognized nationally and internationally as one of the founders of humanistic psychology. He initiated programs of study abroad in Mexico and France and frequently lectured in Italy, China, France, Japan, and Russia creating more than 250 scholarly works, and publishing and presenting more than 100 papers on creative intuition, the phenomenology of consciousness, research methods, alternative ways of knowing, and the growth-oriented dimension of our humanity.

I fondly remember Dr. Aron’s talk “Anatomy of Creativity” at the 4th International Conference on Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychologies and Psychotherapies in Guangzhou, China, where we lectured together 5 months before his death. Mike spoke on the evolutionary role of embodied creativity in upright posture and the value priorities of balance and harmony.¹

Dr. Arons served in national and international leadership positions within APA. He was an active member of Division 24 (Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology), 32 (Humanistic Psychology), 49 (Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy), and 52 (International Psychology). He was co-president of Division 32 from 1975-1976 with Stanley Graham and a member-at-large of the executive board of the Society from 1977-1979 and 1986-1989.² He also served as president of The International Human Science Research Association and the Association for Qualitative Research in Psychology.³

Dr. Mike Arons lives on in our hearts. Chris Aanstoos, professor of psychology at UWG, describes Mike as “Socrates and Zorba, Apollo and Dionysus, an elf and a wizard.” Ruth Richards, faculty member of Saybrook Graduate School and co-author of Mike’s obituary said, “Mike was huge in the lives of people he touched, a brilliant mind, subtle and complex, yet with a heart that was simple, giant, pure and open.”⁴ At the 2008 APA meeting of a group of

¹ Arons, M. (2007, September). Anatomy of creativity. Lecture presented at the 4th International Conference on Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychologies and Psychotherapies, Guangzhou, China. See Arons, M. (2007). Standing up for humanity: Upright body, creative instability and spiritual balance. In R. Richards (Ed.), *Everyday creativity and new views of human nature: Psychological, social and spiritual perspectives* (pp.175-193). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association; see also Richards, R., & Whitehouse, H. (2008). Obituary. Subtle mind, open heart: Mike Aron remembered (1929-2008). *Psychology of Aesthetic, Creativity, and the Arts*, 2 (4) 264-270.

² S. Jordan (personal communication, February 9, 2009)

³ Richards, R., & Whitehouse, H. (2008). Obituary. Subtle mind, open heart: Mike Aron remembered (1929-2008). *Psychology of Aesthetic, Creativity, and the Arts*, 2(4) 264-270.

⁴ Ledbetter, L. (February, 2008). UWG Community Remembers Arons. *The Campus Chronicle*. Retrieved January 30, 2009 from <http://www.westga.edu/~chronicle/archive/40-03/articles/arons.html>

psychologists from Divisions 10 and 32, Stan Krippner called Mike “a force of nature” and Maureen O’Hara, quoting from John Donne said, “To the glory of God, here’s a man fully alive!”⁵ I share one last note from Chris Aanstoos’s tribute in memoriam to Mike recently published by *The Humanistic Psychologist*:

Anyone who knew him would surely attest, Mike left a huge impact on all he touched. . . . Ever the organizer/disorganizer, leader anarchist, serious/playful, Mike embraced alterity in all its forms, pre-forms, and wild being. To the extent that one’s eyes are a window to one’s soul, it was easy to see Mike’s soul. His eyes twinkled with sheer delight. He approached the world with the wonder of a child and got in return the benefit of living “full tilt, all-out, all the time.”⁶

Dr. E. Mark Stern earned his EdD from Columbia University in 1955 and completed post-doctoral work at the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London and thereafter worked at The Maudsley Hospital from 1955-1956. In 1962, Mark earned a certificate in psychoanalysis from the Training Institute of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis in New York City and has been in private practice since 1956. Additionally, Dr. Stern was chief psychologist of the New York Clinic for Mental Health from 1960-1964, as well as a consultant in psychology for The George W. Henry Foundation from 1956-1962.

From 1964-the present, Mark has served as assistant, full professor, and now professor emeritus of the Graduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Iona College, New Rochelle, New York and formerly adjunct professor of psychology at Seton Hall University and Fordham University. He was also a member of the teaching faculty for the American Institute for Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis as well as the Training Institute for Mental Health Practitioners, both in New York, and in 1994 was a visiting professor of psychology at the Catholic University of Australia. Dr. Stern served as editor of *The Journal of Pastoral Counseling* from 1967-1976, of *VOICES: The Journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists* from 1976-1988, and was the founding editor of *The Psychotherapy Patient Monograph Series* from 1988-2003. Mark has concentrated most of his authorship to books, chapters, articles and projects in the sometimes convergence of religious belief and what is central to the practice of psychotherapy.

Dr. Stern has served APA in leadership positions as president of Division 36, (Psychology of Religion) and 32 (Humanistic Psychology). Additionally, he served four terms on the APA Council of Representatives and was a member of the Fellows Chair Committee for Division 32. Mark is currently a fellow of APA Division 12 (Clinical Psychology), 29 (Psychotherapy and Substance Abuse), 32 (Humanistic Psychology), 36 (Psychology of Religion), and 52 (International Psychology); a fellow of the Association for Psychological Science; and a diplomat in clinical psychology of the American Board of Professional Psychology. He is also a member of the Dutchess County (NY) Mental Hygiene Board, a trustee of the Stanford Free Library, and the finance chair of the Dutchess County Democratic Committee.

Reflecting on his life presently, Mark comments:

Looking back on the years devoted to the field of humanistic psychology, what I treasure most were the wonderment of close contact with some of its pioneers sadly forgotten: Andras Angyal, John Warkentin, Rollo May, Karen Machover, Molly Harrower, and Thomas Hora, and of the lifetime opportunity to have mentored many whose own contributions continue to enrich a new dawn in the art and science of a humanism that

⁵ Richards & Whitehouse, 2008, p. 268.

⁶ Aanstoos, C. (2008). In memoriam: A tribute to Mike Arons. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 36(3-4), p. 375.

continues to be born. A good portion of the time I spend in my study looking over verdant fields and grazing deer, seeing an occasional client, attempting to write memoirs and still plugging at producing professional articles. Most of all, I now rejoice in the opportunities to cherish my three offspring and five grandchildren while being companion, lover, and legislative assistant to my wife (Councilwoman) Virginia Fraser Stern.⁷

Much beloved for his passionate contributions and commitment to Division 32, Dr. E. Mark Stern embodies the letter and spirit of this award through his service and inspiration to all.

Author:

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⁷ E. M. Stern (personal communication, February 9, 2009)