

Alfred Freedman

Fought to declassify homosexuality as mental illness

During his long life, Alfred Freedman never wavered in his commitment to defend the basic human rights of all people, especially those affected by mental illness, physical disability, political oppression, and financial disadvantage, and those from other minority groups. "He did not retreat from controversy and he never hesitated to express his views regardless of how unpopular they might be," said Abraham Halpern, a long time friend who is now professor emeritus of psychiatry at New York Medical College.

Conservative generation

But in 1972, when Freedman was asked by fellow younger, progressive psychiatrists to lead the battle against the older conservative generation by running for president of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), Freedman declined. Freedman, chairman of the department of psychiatry at New York Medical College, was a pragmatist: he saw no chance of winning.

High on the agenda of the rebellious younger generation was to remove the designation of homosexuality from the official *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual II* as a sexual deviation. Freedman's colleagues, seeing him as the ideal candidate to lead the battle, eventually succeeded in convincing him to run. Out of 20000 votes, Freedman was elected by three votes. A task force was created to draft a resolution to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders.

In December 1973, after lengthy debate, the resolution was approved by the APA board on a 13 to 0 vote with two abstentions, triggering front page headlines in major newspapers and being hailed by gay rights advocates as a great victory. The APA action helped spur other organisations in subsequent years to adopt similar stances. Professor Halpern said, "Without Dr Freedman's leadership, the prejudice and discrimination against homosexuals in the psychiatric community would not have come to an end."

Freedman's term as APA president also coincided with US President Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal, which included a burglary by Nixon operatives at the office of the psychiatrist of the antiwar activist Daniel Ellsberg. Freedman was outraged by the breach in confidentiality of health records and formed the National Commission on Confidentiality of Health Records. As APA president, Freedman also condemned the Soviet Union's government for

detaining political dissidents in psychiatric hospitals, leading a group of psychiatrists to discuss the matter with Soviet colleagues and to visit mental hospitals.

Alfred Mordecai Freedman was born on 7 January 1917, in Albany, New York, to immigrants from Poland who struggled financially to care for their four children. A scholarship allowed him to attend Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, where he earned a bachelors degree in 1937. After earning his medical degree in 1941 from the University of Minnesota, he began an internship in Harlem Hospital in New York, but he resigned after the United States entered the second world war to join the Army Air Corps. His first posting was to a military laboratory in Miami followed by a posting as chief of laboratories at a 1000 bed military hospital in Gulfport, Mississippi.

After discharge in 1946 at the rank of major, he began pathology training at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, leaving the next year to work as a medical physiologist under Harold Himwich at the Army Chemical Center in Edgewood, Maryland. Freedman's research on acetylcholine and cholinesterase, with the use of diisopropylfluorophosphate as an enzymatic poison, led to important papers on the mechanisms of convulsions.

He began a psychiatry residency in 1948 at Bellevue Hospital in New York, later recalling that the ward for disturbed patients "certainly was a snake pit—patients oversedated with sodium amyltal, the smell of paraldehyde in the air, and patients in camisoles, all bound up." He rose to become senior psychiatrist in the children's service, also conducting research in childhood schizophrenia and paediatric psychopharmacology. In 1955 he was appointed chief psychiatrist of the

department of paediatrics at Downstate College of Medicine of the State University of New York.

Freedman moved to New York Medical College in 1960 as the first full time chairman of the fledgling department of psychiatry, overseeing its growth into a global leader. He felt existing textbooks were inadequate, so teamed up with Harold Kaplan to

publish in 1967 the highly regarded *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, now in its ninth edition. He also was involved in several efforts to improve community mental health for poorer people and minorities in New York City, often focusing on alcohol and drug misuse programmes. He retired in 1990 as chair and professor emeritus of psychiatry.

Participation in executions

He teamed up with Professor Halpern to campaign against the death penalty, as well as doctors' participation in executions and the practice of using psychopharmacological agents to treat psychotic prisoners so that they could

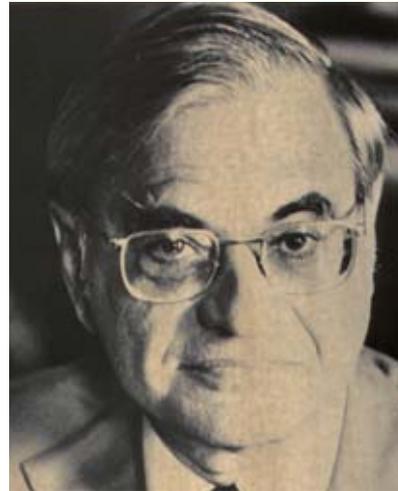
be declared competent to be executed. In 2008 he was honored with the APA human rights award.

Freedman often wrote letters to the *New York Times* to complain of social injustice. His last letter was in October 2010 in response to antigay remarks by a New York politician (www.nytimes.com/2010/10/13/opinion/113gay.html). "Sad," he wrote, that "we observe the continuation of statements and actions by some that oppose the acceptance of homosexual people as true and valuable citizens." He leaves his wife of 68 years, Marcia Freedman, and two sons.

Ned Stafford

Alfred Freedman, psychiatrist (b 1917; q 1941, University of Minnesota), died on 17 April 2011 from complications from surgery to treat a fractured hip.

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;342:d3912



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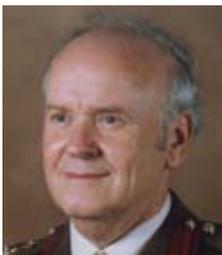
Peter Woodland Hunt

Former general surgeon Zambia (b 1916; q Middlesex Hospital, London, 1939; FRCS), d 8 April 2011. After qualification, Peter Woodland Hunt was drafted into the Royal Army Medical Corps, seeing action in Norway, Northern Ireland, Normandy, and India before being demobilised lieutenant colonel. In 1950, after further training in orthopaedics and general surgery and gaining his FRCS, Peter became one of the few surgeons in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia). He rapidly learnt to cope efficiently with mine accidents, ophthalmology, plastic surgery, and obstetrics, in addition to a heavy general surgical load—truly a general surgeon. In 1976 he retired to Alderney, where he created a delightful garden. Quiet and unassuming, he enjoyed classical music, reading widely, and the company of his family and many friends. Predeceased by Margaret, his wife of 44 years, he leaves two children and four granddaughters.

Geoff Ridgway

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;342:d3872

Lewis Johnman



Former brigadier Territorial Army Medical Services (b 1932; q Glasgow 1956; CBE, QHP), d 2 April 2011. Lewis Johnman (“Louis”) graduated with commendation, and during pre-registration jobs published original research in a prestigious medical journal. Before national service he took a three year short service commission with the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was general practitioner in Buckinghamshire for 14 years before moving to Glasgow in 1976, also becoming company doctor for CWS Scotland and United Biscuits, Glasgow, and joining the Territorial Army Medical Services (TAMS). Soon commanding officer

of 205 Scottish General Hospital, he was by 1989 the most senior officer in TAMS. Latterly he was deacon, Incorporation of Tailors, of the Trades House of Glasgow. Predeceased by his wife, Flora, in 2006, he leaves a partner, Anna Fraser; two daughters by his marriage; and two grandchildren.

Alastair McNeill

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;342:d3870

Nigel John Paul Lehmann



Former general practitioner Hook Norton, Oxfordshire (b 1935; q Cambridge/St Bartholomew’s Hospital, London, 1960; MRCPG, DRCOG, DCH), d 29 November 2010. After house jobs, Nigel John Paul Lehmann took trainee positions in Cornwall and Suffolk before settling in north Oxfordshire. He practised as a traditional rural GP, familiar with his patients’ illnesses, foibles, and needs, and always courteous and caring. In 1972 he took a sabbatical as resident doctor in the Falklands, where he became an expert on the philately of the islands. Saddened by the death of one of his sons in an industrial accident and aware that his memory was failing, Nigel retired in 1995, and was cared for by his wife and extended family at home. He left his brain to Alzheimer’s research. He leaves a wife, Julia; four children; and 10 grandchildren.

Anne Edwards

Martin Harris

Donald Lane

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;342:d3873

Patricia Jean Money

Former general practitioner Trowbridge, Wiltshire (b 1936; q Royal Free Hospital, London, 1961; DMJ), died from ovarian cancer on 5 February 2011. After house jobs at St Alfege’s Hospital, Greenwich, Patricia Jean



Money (“Pat”) worked as a general practitioner in Kingston before moving to Wiltshire in 1972. She was active in community child health and family planning before joining the Adcroft Surgery in Trowbridge. Her work as a police surgeon led her to obtain the diploma in medical jurisprudence in 1989. She became senior partner and retired in 1994 after seeing the practice move into purpose built accommodation designed by her husband, Michael, an architect. In retirement she sang, painted, travelled, played golf, and was president of the Alzheimer’s Society - Wiltshire, as well as remaining the linchpin of her family. She leaves Michael, two daughters, and four grandchildren.

Caroline Ramsay

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;342:d3875

Peter Russell Payne



Former consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Basingstoke District Hospital (b 1930; q Trinity College Dublin 1954; FRCSEd, FRCOG), d 4 May 2011.

A talented tennis player, Peter Russell Payne always knew that medicine was his vocation. After qualification and jobs at Bedford and Hammersmith Hospitals, he joined the Royal Air Force, working in obstetrics and gynaecology at Ely Hospital and Wegburg Hospital, Germany. After leaving the RAF, he completed his training in Oxford. In 1969 he became consultant in Basingstoke, setting up the obstetrics and gynaecology department from scratch. He was

known for his gentle, compassionate manner and for fostering collaboration between the hospital and general practice. Outside work, he could be found on the golf course or at his children’s sporting events. He leaves a wife, Phyllis; three children; and six grandchildren.

Donald Payne

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;342:d3871

John Harold Wallis



Former general practitioner Boston, Lincolnshire (b 1922; q The London 1946), d 22 March 2011. After house jobs in London and two years in the Royal Army Medical Corps, John Harold Wallis joined a two man practice in Boston, Lincolnshire. During his three years in partnership he developed an interest in anaesthetics and achieved hospital practitioner grade, often giving anaesthetics to patients he had earlier sent into hospital. He also worked for many years as a local police surgeon. He was interested in politics, being a local councillor for over 20 years and mayor of Boston in 1983. He was interested in most sports and over the years acquired an impressive collection of Commonwealth stamps. He leaves Pat, his wife of over 60 years; two children; and four grandchildren.

Michael Wallis

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;342:d3876

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