



OBITUARIES

Leonard Irving Liebling

Michael Toseland



Leonard Irving Liebling ("Len") was born in West Bridgford, Nottingham, in 1938. His parents were Nathan and Leah, and his older siblings, Sydney and Fay. Len was the first in his Jewish family to go to university, in Birmingham, where he studied medicine.

He carried out research on lithium as a treatment for manic depressive psychosis and published an article in *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* in 1970. Len was a natural listener. His ambition, to become "the first sane psychiatrist," was largely fulfilled, according to his family and colleagues. He worked at Barnsley Hall in Bromsgrove and then as a psychiatric registrar

at Birmingham United Teaching Hospitals, and the Midland Nerve Hospital. He moved to Middlewood psychiatric hospital in Sheffield as senior registrar, worked at Whiteley Wood clinic, and later moved to Highcroft Hospital in Erdington, where he continued to pursue his interests in group work and therapeutic communities. Len was person centred and antibeavioural in his approach to psychiatry, and he was especially keen on his medical student teaching duties. He was an honorary founding consultant member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, serving on the executive committee of the Midlands Region and the national council. Latterly Len left the NHS and entered the newly created Woodbourne Clinic in Birmingham, where he was able to see patients in a more leisurely environment.

Len married twice. He leaves three children (Helen, Alison, and Jonathan) and two stepdaughters (Debbie and Eileen), for whom he also had the role of a father. Apart from family life, his passions were football (the Villa), cricket, jazz, and, latterly, golf. He was an active member of Sutton Coldfield Rotary Club. A man of humour and affection, he had many loyal friends.

On a personal note, Len was the most honourable man I have known. Doing what he considered right, proper, and in the best interests of all governed his entire life. His gentle manner and quiet voice gave his opinions and decisions more force than any outbursts of feeling could ever have done. His professional attitude was one of understanding, compassion, and willingness to listen. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Biography

Consultant psychiatrist Birmingham (b 1938; q Birmingham 1962; DPM Eng, FRCPsych), died from metastatic bladder carcinoma on 3 November 2016

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