

## **John L. Doris**

April 12, 1923 – January 22, 2008

John Doris, Professor Emeritus of Human Development and founding director of the Family Life Development Center (FLDC) in Cornell's College of Human Ecology, died January 22, 2008 at age 84.

A member of the Cornell faculty since 1963, he served terms as director of the graduate program and associate chair in the Department of Human Development and was an active and dedicated mentor of many graduate students and newly hired faculty. He introduced a graduate curriculum around individual testing and assessment and directed a graduate training in psychopathology. He served as director of the FLDC from its establishment in 1974 until his retirement and appointment as Professor Emeritus in 1993, though he continued to work on center programs until his death.

The FLDC serves as a resource for extension, research and teaching related to issues of family stress and child maltreatment. Under Doris' leadership, the FLDC established a federal regional Resource Center for Child Abuse and Neglect as well as for Foster Care and Adoption, and the New York State Child Protective Services Training Institute, the first of its kind in the country dedicated to providing basic and advanced training to child protective workers and supervisors.

Four other major programs inaugurated under his leadership that continue today and have worldwide impact include: the Residential Child Care Project to prevent abuse and increase the quality of care in residential settings; the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect to ensure that researchers have access to federally funded research data; the Internet-based Child Abuse Prevention Network, a worldwide resource to apply information technology to child abuse prevention; and the Military Projects, to prevent child maltreatment and domestic violence in families connected to the armed forces and help family members prepare for the stress of deployment.

Doris also directed the center while it was instrumental in developing the private, nonprofit New York State Federation of Task Forces on Child Abuse and Neglect. The largest advocacy organization for maltreated children in New York State, the federation, now known as Prevent Child Abuse New York, is affiliated with the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

Doris grew up in the Bronx and graduated magna cum laude from the College of the City of New York in 1951. He earned a Ph.D. degree in 1957 in Child Clinical Psychology from Yale University. From 1958-63, he was chief psychologist in the Yale Child Study Center and an Assistant Professor in Yale's Department of Psychology before he joined the Cornell faculty.

Doris' research and teaching broadly concerned child clinical psychology, child and family psychopathology, and learning disabilities, as well as visual acuity in infants and young children. In addition to numerous journal articles and chapters, in 1969 he published the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of an award-winning book Psychological Problems in Mental Deficiency with his longtime mentor and collaborator, Yale professor Seymour Sarason. Their groundbreaking 1979 work, Educational Handicap, Public Policy and Social History, continues to receive both scholarly and popular interest.

In 1991, he edited a landmark volume, The Suggestibility of Children's Recollections, published by the American Psychological Association. This highly-cited volume was the culmination of an historic three-day convocation at Cornell of top researchers throughout North America and Europe prompted by concerns about the reliability of children's eyewitness testimony in cases of alleged child abuse. The conference has been widely viewed as setting a decade-long research agenda for the field.

Predeceased by his wife, Marjorie Fouts Doris, M.D., Doris is survived by five children.

*John Eckenrode, Chairperson; Ritch Savin-Williams*

