

In Memorium

Olga Silverstein

Renowned family therapist and teacher Olga Silverstein, 86, died peacefully at her home in New York City surrounded by her family on February 24, 2009. To honor her life and work, the Ackerman Institute for the Family has established The Olga Silverstein Training award that will be presented annually to a gifted student who has completed the live clinical part of Ackerman's program and is entering the first year externship training.

A late starter in the family therapy field, she soon made up for her delayed entry and blazed an outstanding path over several decades. The daughter of Hungarian immigrants, she came to the United States at age seven, married young, and remained home rearing her three children until she was forty. Over the next seven years, she secured a high school diploma, a bachelor's degree, and then a master of social work degree. In the mid-1970s she was co-founder with Peggy Papp of the Brief Therapy Project at the Ackerman Institute. The strategic interventions they developed from a systemic perspective are powerfully illustrated in Olga's training film, "Who's Depressed?"

During the decade of the 1970s she and Papp joined Betty Carter and Marianne Walters to launch The Women's Project in Family Therapy. They focused on examining the sexist concerns and theories that dominated their clinical practice, and soon began to offer workshops in the United States and abroad on women's relationships in families. The pioneering and classic work, *The Invisible Web: Gender Patterns in Family Relationships*, was written by the four colleagues from this experience.

Olga Silverstein became an international authority on mother-son relationships following publication of her book, *The Courage to Raise Good Men*. Some of the strength and power of her therapeutic work is reflected in her book with Bradford Keeney, *The Therapeutic Voice of Olga Silverstein*. Besides teaching and supervising in New York and serving as a clinical research associate at Texas Tech University, Olga was also an honorary professor of clinical psychiatry in Spain and made presentations at the famed Tavistock Clinic in London. The American Family Therapy Academy honored her with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Summarizing her strengths, contributions, skills, and personal qualities in written words is not possible: She was a presence.