

Dr. Gordon Lawrence to be accorded Distinguished Membership

by Prof. Burkard Sievers
President, ISPSO
2006 ISPSO Annual Meeting

ISPSO allows for a class of Distinguished Members. To date we have had two: Harry Levinson and (formerly) Harold Bridger. The Board has decided to accord Dr. Gordon Lawrence to be accepted as a distinguished member at the December Board meeting. I have already informed Gordon about it and am delighted that he has accepted our invitation as a Distinguished Member.

Some of the reasons that made us taking this decision were:

First, Dr. Lawrence has a long history of contribution to the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations. He was a co-director of the Group Relations Program at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in the 1970's and 80's where he contributed significantly to the development of Group relations work. Later involvements with innovations in Group Relations have been in many countries including Australia, France, Germany and Eastern Europe. Included in his innovations are:

- The Praxis Event (an effort to create a contrapuntal space in group relations conferences whereby participants could develop a task, system and roles *ab initio*);
- Introduction of systemic role analysis into the Group Relations Program at the Tavistock;
- Introduction of Listening Post's to OPUS;

- Basic assumption 'Me-ness' with Alastair Bain and Lawrence Gould
- Social Dreaming – which he began at the Tavistock Institute and has developed internationally;
- The Social Dreaming Institute.

These innovations in practice are used and accepted as basics in our field.

Second, he has contributed through his many books and articles that inform colleagues and students in programs around the world. It is not simply the length of the bibliography that is important. It is the quality of his work. His ideas have been basic to all of us in this field. I would say they have been groundbreaking and fundamental to the way we see systems psychodynamics. He is among the few authors who thoroughly grasp the systemic social psychological processes at the basis of group and organisational, rather than personal and interpersonal relations.

This is linked to his teaching and generous support for many colleagues and students in the areas of theory, practice and consulting.

Perhaps his greatest contribution is Social Dreaming and the thinking that lies behind this as a methodology for exploring unconscious or infinite social process. And, it may be for this alone that we consider him for distinguished membership.

Let me add a final personal remark. I am very grateful that I know Gordon both as a colleague and a very good friend for more than

three decades. And it is most likely that without what I have learned from and through him and his ongoing encouragement I would never have made it to choose the psychoanalytic study of organizations as my field of profession. I am certain that many of you are equally grateful to him.

I am delighted to welcome you, Gordon, as a distinguished member of ISPSO.