

IN HONOR OF JOHN ROBERT NEWBROUGH¹

You may not know that in Buhl Hospital in Twin Falls, Idaho, Dr. Worester delivered an infant boy at 6:30 in the cool of the morning of May 30, 1934. John Robert Newbrough was born on Memorial Day in the middle of Franklin Roosevelt's first term. Bob grew strong and wiry on the family farm, raising and harvesting sugar beets, sorely needed in the sugar-short times of World War II. He spent much time with migrant farm workers. He was deeply touched by, and never forgot, the plight of hard-working, poor, and neglected humans.

By June of 1951, in the middle of Harry Truman's second term, he graduated as the valedictorian of his high school class. Four years later he graduated from the College of Idaho, magna cum laude, with a BA in Psychology. He moved south the next year and earned an MA and PhD in Psychology at the University of Utah in 1959, the last of the Eisenhower years. Ernst Beier wrote me that, "One of the things [Bob] might not remember was the sense of infallibility [we] attached to his judgement In staff conference at the VA, students would often first wait to hear what Bob would say. He would mention a stock on the stock market, and other students and some of the professors would rush to buy."

Then, at age 25, bearing a new PhD, and striking sagacity, John Robert began a Fellowship in the historic program created by Eric Lindemann and Gerald Caplan in Community Mental Health at the Departments of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School.

There he also met Jim Kelly who had completed a year in that program. Jim wrote, "Bob and I worked together in the Human Relations Service of Wellesley, doing consultation activities and community research, establishing an epidemiologic survey of this community. . . . [Then as now] he continually points to resources that keep us from being insular."

¹An introduction to J. R. Newbrough, presented at the ceremony honoring Professor Newbrough with the Award for Distinguished Contributions to Theory and Research by the Society for Community Research and Action, Division 27 of the American Psychological Association, at its meeting in Los Angeles, August 14, 1994.

In 1960, Jack Kennedy's election year, he completed the Fellowship and joined the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Service. There he continued his inquiries in community phenomena (with Jim Kelly, John Baldwin, and many others) at the historic NIMH Mental Health Study Center in Prince George's County, Maryland. Jim Kelly wrote, "One of the most satisfying activities for me was the work we did together in creating a Reference Guide for the field of community mental health and social psychiatry . . . published by Harvard University Press in 1962. . . . This work also included coauthors John Baldwin, Sid Gelfand, Herb Lange, and Al Simmons In all these activities, Bob was a dedicated, resilient, and extremely thoughtful colleague."

Bob Shellow also worked with him at the Study Center, and he said, "I was frankly surprised when he jumped at the chance to provide consultation and training to the local police department. I didn't think a country boy from Idaho and Utah would feel comfortable in an urban policing operation. But, in his characteristic low key manner, he won the respect of many officers and was invaluable in helping me set up a juvenile squad. . . . [Also], I will always be grateful for the reassurance Bob gave me after I had been booed, jeered, and labeled a "fascist" during a paper presentation on civil rights protection training at the APA convention in 1964."

During that time Bob also encountered the seniority system in American psychology. Joe Sharp wrote, "[Bob and I] had the notion of compiling and editing a fourth volume to follow E. G. Boring's first three volumes of *A History of Psychology in Autobiography*. . . . By the time several hundred of our requests for nominations had been returned, we received a letter from Garner Lindsey stating that we had no right to continue our project. . . . He and Boring . . . had just recently decided to do volume IV. . . . We had put a lot of work into the project and I wasn't willing to give it up without a good fight. Bob, ever the diplomat and cool head, thought we ought to compromise. At the meeting Boring was a gentleman . . . [and in the end] Bob made [a mutually satisfactory] 'deal'. . . . We would probably have been denied [that satisfaction] had Bob not kept his cool."

In 1966, in the middle of Lyndon Johnson's second term, Bob joined the faculty of Peabody College. During his time at Peabody he helped to develop, among many influential programs, the Transactional Ecological Psychology Training Program. That program was a creative amalgam of clinical, counseling, school, and community psychology.

Don Klein wrote: [At a department planning session, I saw] . . . Bob and his colleagues . . . exposing themselves to the most intense, complicated . . . procedure . . . taking the risk of making on-the-spot, life-shaping decisions. . . . Yet Bob's quiet steady presence made it seem . . . quite un-

remarkable. . . . Best of all it worked. . . . It [created] the most nearly unique program ever developed in [professional] psychology."

Said David Chavis, a former student, "He was the only person who could give a really understandable explanation of Transactional Ecological Psychology and why it was a graduate program."

Here is a story from Howard Sandler, one of his long-time Peabody colleagues. At an APA meeting in New Orleans in the 1970s, Bob and a group of a half dozen colleagues were walking from one hotel to another. They were confronted by a Hari Krishna solicitor, all properly robed and shorn and pestering. The group scattered, dodged, and avoided the fellow—all but one. Bob lingered and listened intently to what the fellow had to say. Later he caught up with his friends some two blocks down the street.

"How much did you give him?" one asked.

"Oh, I didn't give him any money. It turned out he really needed to be listened to."

Michael Berger, now in practice in Atlanta, wrote: "Bob . . . seems curious toward the world in an almost Buddhist sense, treasuring his awareness of it, rather than . . . wanting to work his will on it."

All around him appreciate his loyalty to Peabody. Lawrence Wrightsman, now at the University of Kansas but a former Peabody colleague, wrote to Bob: "your life has exemplified . . . [the] application of the principle of community in everything you do. . . . In the mid 1970s, when the then new President made unwise changes that led to the likely demise of the institution, some of us fled [Peabody]. . . . But you stayed and sacrificed at least a year of your professional life in order to make the transition to the assimilation by Vanderbilt as fair as possible."

In another domain, Bob's Latin American connections began during his tenure at NIMH and have been strengthened steadily since. Dr. Eduardo Rivera-Medina, Rio Piedras, PR: "His care and concern for others has always been exemplary; he has modeled for us THE community psychologist." Chris Keys wrote: "At the Interamerican Congress of Psychology in Costa Rica, Bob's former students, now faculty in Mexico, were very enthusiastic to see him. . . . His invited address . . . presented a rich scholarly framework for a post modern conceptualization of consultation. . . . Bob is a mensch with a light touch."

Juan Antonio Ortiz-Valdes, a community psychologist in Guadalajara, wrote to Bob: "[In a private conference with you] I brought up a personal issue that had to do with an interpersonal relationship with a colleague: You were attentive, respectful, and understanding [and then silent]. Your . . . silence . . . allowed me to search for and discover my own response. . . . Little by little I learned that in these moments I could discover my own answers."

Bob was editor of the *Journal of Community Psychology* for 14 years from 1974 to 1988. Ray Lorion wrote, "As Bob's successor Editor, . . . I have learned much about his values as scientist and scholar. I learned from him . . . the need for our discipline to involve researchers and service providers from other cultures and disciplines. . . . His early work on the *Journal* is the reason why so many of its important papers have been submitted from around the world."

David McMillan, now practicing in Nashville, wrote to Bob: "Your wife was planning a joint birthday party for us. . . . You wanted to include everyone. . . . It was a matter of principle for you. You stood for being inclusive, not exclusive. One hundred plus people showed up at your house. To this day, Bob, . . . [there] you stand, opening doors."

John Dunne, of Galway, Ireland, wrote: "His academic role is never a persona but is an instrument of the values and concerns which shape his whole life. He has a deeply spiritual side to his nature which is the well-spring of his integrity and innate sense of hospitality."

From Drs. Lee and Maria Hannell now in practice in Phoenix, AZ: "A noble soul and a full heart . . . [Bob] nurtured positivism in people of all ages, places, and sets of mind."

Carl Young wrote: "My favorite Bob Newbrough story [involves our being held accountable for someone else's] recommendation to a Board for the Developmentally Disabled, [a recommendation] that bordered on 'Shoot the sucker.' [The recommendation infuriated the gathering.] Bob creatively turned an almost mob scene into a constructive problem-solving forum over a tense several-hour period. The eventual outcome was so positive that it would make anyone's 'highlights film' of great community psychology moments. When I asked Bob why he did not point out that we were not responsible for the recommendation, he explained that this would not have solved anything for the clients. By taking the issue on as if it were ours, we also got a chance to participate in fixing it."

Jack Nottingham, Director of the Rosalynn Carter Institute, praised Bob (as did many of his other colleagues) in this way: "Bob had the good sense to find Lynn Walker, court her, marry her, and stay with her. . . . Bob is damned smart."

Said former First Lady Rosalynn Carter in a letter to Bob, "I have always trusted your judgment and valued your ideas. You have been of great help to me in the development and guidance of our work at the Rosalynn Carter Institute of Georgia Southwestern College."

Paul Dokecki, a close collaborator at Peabody, wrote:

Several months ago, Bob was having dinner in Atlanta with President and Mrs. Carter in conjunction with a meeting of the board of the Rosalynn Carter Institute [a board of which Bob is a member]. . . . Bob mentioned having heard an interview

on NPR with an aide to Billy Graham who talked about Graham's success in winning the confidence of North Korea's leaders by engaging them in a reasonable, non-threatening, respectful fashion. . . . President Carter attested to the wisdom of Graham's approach and said the he too had had several fruitful interchanges with the North Korean leaders over the years. . . .

When Bob got back to Nashville, he concluded that President Carter was the very person to help break the log jam in North Korea. He . . . judiciously made that suggestion to [Vice-president] Al Gore, believing [that he] and President Clinton might not be aware of the great resource they had available in Mr. Carter. . . . As they say the rest is history.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you a long-standing, deeply valued friend, the Prince of all noble souls with full hearts, a person who constantly opens doors and very quietly gets unworkable things to work, John Robert Newbrough.

John C. Glidewell²
Peabody College of Vanderbilt University

²All correspondence should be sent to John C. Glidewell, 101 Longwood Place, Nashville, Tennessee 37213-1926.