

In memory of

Ann Eluned (Morgan) Niall

23 April 1926 – 17 April 2019

Ann was maybe not an “Accidental Feminist”; rather she was a strong, determined, feminist ahead of her time. She was powerful role model for many women in today’s health-care workforce (and men).

Ann came to the Royal Children’s Hospital in 1960 to take up a post as Assistant Physician, paediatrics. She had trained in medicine in London during the end of the Second World War and then went to *St Paul Hospital in Vancouver, Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Children’s Medical Centre in Boston and then the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children in London*. I remember her stories about her obstetric training in Dublin at the Rotunda Hospital; riding her pushbike to people’s homes to help the new baby meet the world.

Ann was passionate about trying to achieve the best children and she was part of, what she called the marvellous “*explosion in paediatrics*” which began in the 50s after World War II, with new medical disciplines, treatments such as antibiotics, steroids and paediatric cardiac surgery, and a dawning awareness of child abuse. Crucially, Ann was one of an increasing number of people committed to seeing the whole child, taking care to understand their inner world, and their emotional and social development.

Ann was a resident doctor at the West London Hospital where her consultant Dr Potter, a Canadian, was a close friend of Dr Donald Winnicott paediatrician and psychoanalyst. Both men had a profound influence upon her career. At that time in Western societies there was minimal acknowledgement or understanding of infant-parent attachment, nor concern about separating children from their parents. Ann however was acutely aware of the impact of separation upon the young child.

From the work of Donald Winnicott, she appreciated the importance of seeing the baby as a person. Winnicott provided a strong theoretical framework that scaffolded Ann’s passion for seeing the baby as a person. When working in London at the Tavistock Clinic, Ann met and learned from Winnicott, Bowlby and many others. She came back with a passion for psychoanalytic ways of thinking. Ann was doing infant-parent psychotherapy here, whilst Selma Fraiberg in Michigan, equally passionate, was also writing about it.

I remember Ann meeting with a 6-week-old baby who could not look at her distressed parents; they were convinced she was profoundly disturbed, deaf or autistic. With the baby’s parents beside her, Ann spoke gently and liltily with the baby allowing this sad baby to grasp Ann’s eyes and her face with her gaze. She glanced at Ann’s silver bracelet, Ann gently placed in her hands, to play. A powerful transformation occurred such that this tiny baby and her parents were able to see and perceive each

other and move on. She was not autistic; rather there were no conscious reasons why they had not been able to see each other.

Ann was present at the birth of the **Australian Association of Group Psychotherapists**, along with George Christie, Bill Blomfield and many others, she saw the Association grow into a thriving organisation, which has delivered analytic group psychotherapy training for many clinicians. Ann was held in the highest regard by all her psychoanalytic colleagues.

In the 1960s, at the Children's Hospital, Ann gradually moved from paediatrics into psychiatry. She said *"it took 3 or 4 years and I saw some patients in psychiatry, but I couldn't bear to leave my stethoscope behind. I was still the baby's doctor... But as a paediatrician we were not really interested in how the children thought and felt. I had children of my own and my main interest was understanding children. I wanted to see how babies became who they are!"*

Hence Ann devoted her career to understanding *how babies become who they are, and how parents become parents.*

Ann was one of the founding members of the Australian Association for Infant Mental Health. We had our first Pacific Rim meeting in Melbourne in 1989 with Tiffany Field and Kyle Pruett as guest speakers, with Ann the creative person behind it all. Ann's commitment to the Australian Association for Infant Mental Health was unwavering.

When the Graduate Diploma and Masters Course in infant mental health at the University of Melbourne was established in 1996, Ann was there delivering a core part of the course, infant observation. Supported by Robin Wilson, Ann taught into her 80's and countless clinicians have gained from the incisive insights which Ann delivered in the infant observation seminar: always looking to the baby's discourse.

In an acknowledgement of Ann's amazing contribution to the life of babies and families, Dr Julie Stone and colleagues at AAIMH Victoria set up the **Ann Morgan Prize** for creative writing in infant mental health. As many know Ann was passionate about language, poetry, and writing as a way to bring to life the pains and the passions of the baby and the family in formation. She was an advisor to the Prize selection panel, which includes Joanna Murray Smith our amazing Melbourne author and playwright.

So, Ann Morgan, a very bright young children's doctor, coming from Wales, profoundly touched and influenced the thinking and feeling in the lives of so many people. She will be missed.

Ann always said what she thought, and Ann always said what she thought needed to be said.

Goodbye Ann Morgan.

Gies a hand my trusty friend, for auld lang syne

April 2019