In Memoriam

Dr. John Walker, Professor Emeritus
(1949 - 2018)

A passionate scientist and clinician of great integrity, intelligence, humour, and warmth.

Dr. Walker was a clinical psychologist with the Clinical Health Psychology Department (University of Manitoba) and CHP Program (WRHA) from 1980, based at St. Boniface Hospital. He retired from clinical service in 2014, and remained active academically until the time of his death in December, 2018. He was well known to colleagues across Canada and internationally. He embodied the scientist-practitioner, and excelled as a psychotherapist, a researcher, a teacher, and a community advocate.

John Walker & Family Research Fund

To make a donation in Dr. Walker's memory, visit https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/3486 and select John Walker & Family Research Fund from the fund drop-down menu.

This fund was established by Dr. Walker and his family through the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba (ADAM) to support local researchers in the study of anxiety disorders, their treatment and related knowledge translation.

Career Highlights

Among the many career highlights are the following:

Dr. Walker initiated the Anxiety Disorders Clinic in the early 1980s at St. Boniface Hospital, through which he developed highly accessible services for both children and adults, including stepped-care group treatment models, anxiety prevention programming for children in schools, and online self-help programs such as Coaching for Confidence.

He was a highly regarded CBT practitioner for anxiety disorders; his self-help book Triumph Over Shyness: Conquering Shyness and Social Anxiety is in its second edition (co-authored with Dr. Murray Stein).

He conducted workshops for professional training across North America and Australia. Dr. Walker’s passion as a scientist and his vision for accessible, effective psychological treatment contributed both to his research productivity and to his generosity as a mentor.

Dr. Walker’s research contributions are considerable; his productivity is regarded by colleagues as remarkable given that his primary position was as a full time hospital-based clinician.
Dr. Walker published over 150 articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals, a total which is growing as his colleagues continue to publish projects he helped initiate. He had close to 300 scientific conference presentations.

He published 3 books and authored 13 book chapters on topics ranging from anxiety disorders, inflammatory bowel disease, school-based interventions, and self-administered treatments.

While his research has primarily focused on anxiety treatment, his work also extended to other health conditions, examining co-morbid mental illness in immune-mediated inflammatory diseases.

In recent years, he focused his research endeavors on knowledge translation, with the aim of empowering patients to make informed choices about treatment and to participate fully in their treatment.

Dr. Walker spearheaded the establishment of the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba (ADAM), a respected self-help organization which has provided invaluable peer-directed services for over 30 years to Manitobans struggling with anxiety disorders.

Dr. Walker personally trained ADAM’s initial volunteer group leaders and was a member of ADAM’s Board of Directors since its inception, serving as the Chair through several terms through to 2017.

Dr. Walker was also a founding member of the Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada, serving as a board member from its beginning, including two terms as President (2001-2004; 2015-2017).

Dr. Walker gave public talks regularly, and was frequently a guest on Winnipeg CBC radio and the popular Winnipeg CJOB Peter Warren show, providing a strong voice for normalizing and understanding anxiety disorders.

For his innovative contributions to the community’s access to psychological services, Dr. Walker was awarded the Manitoba Psychological Society’s Clifford Robson Award and Distinguished Life Member Award, the Manitoba Association of School Psychologist’s Award of Excellence, the Canadian Mental Health Association’s National President’s Award, and he was made a Fellow, Clinical Section, Canadian Psychological Association.

In 2018, Dr. Walker was awarded the CPA Clinical Section’s inaugural Award for Clinical Excellence in recognition of his leadership in clinical work.