

# In Memory:

## Lizette Peterson-Homer, PhD (1951-2002)

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Several disciplines, including health behavior and injury prevention, lost a very special friend and colleague on July 18, 2002, with the passing of Lizette Peterson-Homer, coauthor of one of the manuscripts published in this special issue of the *American Journal of Health Behavior*. She was only 51 years old. It is not enough to say that Lizette was a consummate professional; she was a consummate human being. Not only was she a most respected and well-recognized scholar, leader, and teacher, but she was also a wonderful parent and spouse and a true Renaissance woman who cooked, was active in her community, and wrote novels in her spare time. She engaged everything she did with passion and competence.

Lizette Peterson-Homer received her BS degree from Utah State University in 1973, and from the University of Utah she received her MS in 1975 and her doctorate in 1978 in clinical psychology. At the time of her death she was a Curators Professor of Psychology at the University of Missouri, Columbia, and had just taken the helm as editor of the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology (JCCP)*, one of the most prestigious journals of the American Psychological Association. It was a position she relished and for which

she was prepared to engage with her usual zeal and passion. Among her countless other honors and awards, she had received the Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Research and Creativity in the Behavioral Sciences and had held the Frederick A. Middlebush Endowed Chair. She had previously served as editor of *Behavior Therapy* and *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, and as associate editor of *JCCP*, *Behavior Therapy*, and *Health Psychology*, and had been a board member or reviewer for 37 other professional journals. She was a Fellow in 5 divisions of the American Psychological Association and was a Fellow in the Association of Applied and Preventive Psychology.

Her contributions to behavioral aspects of injury and injury prevention have been groundbreaking. Her research on parental supervision, developmental risk and protective factors for child maltreatment, preparation of children for surgery and coping with painful medical procedures, and, recently, intimate partner violence has contributed enormously to growth of new research areas. Her published studies and those of her students (see selected bibliography) have added important new knowledge to the behavioral aspects of injury control. One of those is her development of innovative assessment techniques and new methodologies for collecting person-environment variables in injury.

Because of her work, many behavioral scientists became involved in injury prevention, and likewise injury prevention researchers have come to appreciate the role of behavioral science in injury control. Her gift of sharing her work widely with scholars from many disciplines and her love of teaching has led others (among her students and her colleagues) to continue building the field. Researchers such as Michael Roberts, David DiLillo, Michael Cataldo, Charles Irwin, Barbara Morrongiello, ourselves, and many others

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have been influenced to apply developmental principles to injury prevention.

Dr Lizette Peterson-Homer was the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships for her developmental work in children's injuries and was the author or editor of 3 books and well over 100 published professional articles and chapters. CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control was fortunate to have her as a consultant to several projects, including projects related to creating links between behavioral science and injury prevention, developing a taxonomy for children's supervision, developmental aspects of children's pedestrian injuries, and the creation of a research and dissemination plan for CDC's new focus on the prevention of child maltreatment.

Her earliest research involved the preparation of young children for surgery. Her work in that area was pioneering and is still frequently cited. Additionally, she developed validated procedures for alleviating children's stress to painful medical procedures and to medical fears. Well-conceived and implemented research in developmental patterns in childhood injuries followed her work in children's illnesses. Her work in that realm covered characteristics, etiology, and interventions, and she conducted this work with amazing rigor and high standards.

Always with children and their families as the backdrop of her research and service, Lizette's research program on the prevention of child maltreatment focused on effective parenting programs. Not only was her research well respected and truly applied, but also it would be hard to find a principal investigator who was so wholly devoted to the delivery of the service aspect of the research. Lizette knew the participants of her parenting programs very well and consternated over them and with them about how to deliver the best programs. We all could take lessons from the effort she put into her applied research.

We never saw Dr Peterson-Homer teach in a classroom; however, we know that she was an excellent, entertaining, and articulate presenter and that her students followed her like puppies. She was always sure to introduce her students to well-known colleagues at professional meetings, and that her students speak of her with clear and wholehearted affection is evidence that she was an out-

standing teacher.

Lizette Peterson-Homer is survived by her husband, Andrew Homer, (with whom she authored an excellent article on the integrity of the independent variable [fidelity of intervention process]), her children, Kestral and Geddes, her mother, a brother, and two sisters. She died too young. Not so in terms of contributions to the field. She gave us so much to continue to do in children's health and injury and in child maltreatment. We are cheated in terms of what more she had to give to us professionally and how much we lost a wonderful, energetic, brilliant friend and colleague. We are better for having had her in our lives and are left empty by our loss.

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Memorial contributions to her life and work can be made to the Lizette Peterson-Homer Graduate Fellowship Fund, 219 McAlester Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211 or to the Lizette Peterson-Homer Injury Research Grant Fund of the Society of Pediatric Research through the American Psychological Foundation, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002.