

TYPEFACE



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LINKING THE TYPE COMMUNITY



**OTTO
KROEGER
1933-2013**

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FAREWELL TO OTTO!

by Gill Clack, Editor
'TypeFace'

As many of you may have already heard, Otto Kroeger sadly passed away on Monday night, 7th October, 2013, at the age of 80. Otto was a larger than life figure with a huge personality who touched everyone he came into contact with. But there was more to Otto than the 'performer' that we had got used to seeing at conferences and in workshops.

Otto was born on 15th April, 1933, and, after his schooling, became a student at Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York State, which specialized in the liberal arts, with a view to becoming a Minister and where he majored in psychology. Later, in 2001, Otto was instrumental in arranging for his *alma mater* to confer upon Isabel Briggs Myers a posthumous Doctor of Humane Letters degree in recognition of her considerable achievement in developing the MBTI® instrument to make psychological type accessible to people.

After graduating, Otto became a Lutheran minister, a career that spanned some 20 years, much of the time concurrently with his work in private practice as a counsellor. He then spent a further 20 years as an OD consultant and behavioural scientist with the National Training Laboratories (NTL), Institute of Applied Behavioural Sciences (NTL has intellectual connections with the Tavistock Institute). It was during his time at NTL that he was exposed to many different psychological systems and became a great friend of Abraham Maslow, who he regarded as a mentor.

During the 1970s, Otto was very busy with his consulting work at the Department of Education and with other clients. During this time he became exposed to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® instrument which was commonly in use in many organisations. Also in the late 1970s he visited the Center for Application of Psychological Type (CAPT) in Florida and met up with Mary McCaulley, who co-founded the Center with Isabel Briggs Myers, which was incorpo-

rated in 1979. He was also appointed to the Board of CAPT. Otto had, in fact, had a number of conversations with Isabel at around this time, and subsequently became totally immersed in type as an approach to understanding personality differences.

At that time he also became involved in the early development of the Association for Psychological Type (APT) and later became their President in 2000.

He went on to do further work with the US services and many of you will have heard his anecdotes regarding his experiences with 3 Star Generals! This work snowballed as he became involved with such organisations as McDonnell Douglas, General Dynamics, Lockheed and he also worked in a number of colleges and universities.

In the late 1970s Otto moved out of the church and into OD full-time and Otto Kroeger Associates (OKA) was incorporated. OKA became more and more focussed on Myers-Briggs over the coming years and



Otto at Symposium when Hon Doc Conferred on IBM



Otto at BAPT Conference 2006

specialised in providing training in type and the use of the MBTI® instrument to both individuals and trainers.

Around the same time he met Janet Thuesen who he later married. They worked together for a number of years, providing MBTI® training, publishing, marketing and presenting at conferences, etc. Otto was author or co-author of a number of books on type, many with Janet, starting with *Type Talk* in 1988. These were followed by *Personality Type and Religious Leadership* (with Roy Oswald), *Type Talk at Work* and *16 Ways to Love Your Lover*. OKA also produced many videotapes and audio CDs on both type and temperament which have become valuable teaching aids. Otto and Janet's marriage ended in 2002 and he then took Hile Rutledge into partnership in OKA, subsequently selling him the business in 2007.

Otto had, in fact, also been conducting research for some 30 years prior to this on the different responses to the 'unscored' items on the MBTI Form G questionnaire, and had developed theories as to what these might mean. In order to test some of his theories out, he approached his old university and got permission by the Dean to get all the freshmen there to complete the Form G and then, from their responses to the 'unscored' items, he predicted those who he thought were likely to drop out of college. His results were astonishing since, from his analysis of what he called 'the dots' on the questionnaire, his predictions turned out to be two-thirds accurate. He

presented these research results at the APTi Conference in Minneapolis in 2001.

In recent years Otto had been unable to attend APT Conferences but, at the most recent one in Miami in 2013, Peter Geyer accepted the Mary McCaulley Lifetime Achievement

Award on his behalf, where Otto's latest book, with David Goldstein, *Creative You: Using your Personality to Thrive*, was also on display. Peter visited Otto shortly before he died, at the home where he was being cared for, to give him the award and also a poster which included thoughts and good wishes from Conference delegates.

Otto had been twice married (and divorced), his first marriage producing three children - Stephen, Susan and Amy – all of whom survive him. He had no grandchildren. His youngest daughter, Amy, is a doctor and, whilst she was not his physician, was with him when he died.

There was no funeral service for him in Florida where he lived in the later years of his life, but it is expected there will be a Memorial Service, probably in Fairfax, Virginia, some time in the Spring, 2014.



Otto at APTi Conference 2007

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