

Remembering Elaine Siegel

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Elaine V. Siegel, Ph.D., a founding member of the American Dance Therapy Association, a supervising and training psychoanalyst, and a pioneer in dance/movement therapy (DMT), died on December 21, 2013 at her home in Wayland, Massachusetts, a few days before her 85th birthday. Dr. Siegel was born Elaine Letz in Weehawken, New Jersey, in 1928 to German parents. When her parents' marriage failed in 1931, her mother took her to Berlin. Elaine survived the holocaust with the help of various adult relatives, one of whom secured false papers to hide her Jewish heritage. She returned to the United States after the war and married Eugene Siegel. They lived in Huntington, New York, for many years, where they raised her two children, Melanie and Anita.

Dr. Siegel earned her doctorate at Union Graduate School, returning to school after her children were born, and received diplomas from the training division of the Geraldine-Pederson-Krag Clinic in Huntington, New York, and from the New York School for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. She served as the Director of the Motor Development Department of Suffolk Child Development Center, a research facility of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Her unique integration of body phenomena within her psychoanalytic work was integral to how she practiced and taught.

Dr. Siegel was an adjunct clinical professor at Antioch University New England as well as a guest teacher at many universities and psychoanalytic institutes in this country and internationally, including Haifa, Israel, the Berlin Institut für Psychoanalytische Psychotherapie, and Deutsches Institute für Tiefenpsychologische Tanz- und Ausdruckstherapie, Bonn, Germany. She is survived by her daughter, Anita Luck of Wellesley, Massachusetts, her brother, Jochen Platz of Munich, Germany, and two grandchildren, Jeremy and Tamara Luck.

Dr. Siegel was the author of five books in which she detailed her pioneering synthesis of psychoanalysis and DMT as well as numerous articles. Her work has been translated into several languages. The Marian Chace Foundation honored her for her writings and her teaching. Prior to her professional training, she was a prize-winning playwright, dancer, and choreographer. Determined to tell her story in her declining years, she published her final book in 2013, a memoir called *Chaos Unbound: A Jewish Childhood in Nazi Berlin*.

Professional Reflections from Colleague, Michele Rose

In the autumn of 1973, after participating in a workshop led by Elaine Siegel on “Psychoanalytic Dance Therapy,” Elaine invited me to do an internship with her at the Suffolk Child Development Center (SCDC). I stayed on as an intern and later as a staff member until 1980. These were the learning years. Whether because I found her a bit intimidating or because I found her the most generous of teachers, I worked harder and I learned more than ever before and ever since. I would watch her, chin jutting forward, march down the corridor of the SCDC and think how much energy and drive was imbedded in that strut and wonder if she were headed to my treatment room. If she did enter, there would be one of two things offered, either a critique given with furrowed brow or praise given with great excitement. In either case, there

would always be a lesson. Telling me that I “whispered loudly,” she nicknamed me her “libidinal lieutenant.” I never mastered the strut, but hopefully, I have been as generous to the candidates I teach as she was to me. Elaine encouraged me to pursue psychoanalytic training and certification. It was well into my second year of formal institute education before I was assigned a book or a paper that I had not read and discussed with Elaine. She was an extraordinary teacher and became a very good friend.

Reflections from Colleague, Sabine Trautmann-Voigt

“Her spirit is now free to dance” is written on Elaine Siegel’s death notice. One can hardly express any more than this about what was important to Elaine: “My Dears, lie down or dance, the psychological things will come out anyway!” I heard those words 35 years ago and was deeply affected and convinced. Elaine became my most important mentor in my search for a dance and psychotherapeutic identity. Later she became a wonderful professional colleague and friend, and was proud that her approach would strike new roots in her native country. For Elaine, it was never about the rigid concepts of psychoanalysis, but about the “Dance of Life,” about the deep understanding of the mind, and the meaning of human freedom to individuals, including herself.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Elaine integrated the liveliness of dance expression with the stringent concepts of modern psychoanalytic theory. She engaged in psychoanalytically-oriented research on infants, based on cultural theories proposed by Sigmund Freud. Elaine, the pioneer of psychoanalytic DMT, published five books and numerous essays in well-regarded professional journals, in which she made novel associations between theory and clinical experience. She wrote case histories with understanding and compassion while maintaining an unclouded analytical focus that was the foundation of her sharp intellect. She wrote on a variety of topics, including books about lesbians, neglected children, a memoir about her early life in Nazi Germany, and her groundbreaking book about DMT, which was translated into German in 1986. In the early 1980s to the late 1990s, she spent half her time in Switzerland and the other half in the United States. She often visited us in Bonn and taught in Lindau and at various educational institutions abroad. Additionally, we wrote our first book together in 1997, and she became the honorary Chair of the German Institute for In-depth Psychology, Dance Therapy and Expressive Art Therapy. What a fruitful and comprehensive two decades those were! During that time, she motivated us to establish the first German journal for dance therapy, providing a voice and forum for the “new movement on the old continent.” She was a modest and humble woman. At the many events I accompanied her to, she exuded happiness with a warm and unassuming introduction: “I am Elaine Siegel. I used to live in Berlin and now live in New York. I am a dance therapist and a psychoanalyst. If you want to know more, ask now, otherwise, let us start with the dancing.”

As a Jewish child in Berlin, she survived the Nazi inferno with false papers secured by various adult relatives. At age 18, Elaine Siegel went to America. There

she studied ballet and Haitian dance, and became a dance/movement therapist, a renowned psychoanalyst, a founding member of the American Psychoanalytic Association (APA) and an educator at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. She was taught by Liljan Espenak and Marian Chace, was one of the first American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) members, met Frieda Fromm-Reichmann and Harry Stack Sullivan, opened psychotherapy clinics for children, adults, and groups, and directed the Motor Development Department of Suffolk Child Development Center at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. She had a loving husband, with whom she raised their two daughters. The depth and variety of her life fascinated me and I was inspired by her unbending conviction that one has to stand up for what one believes is right or wrong. I came to cherish Elaine foremost for her strength of character and as a priceless mentor and nurturing friend. I will always remember Elaine with gratitude and happiness.

Good-bye, Elaine, and rest in peace.

Reflections from Colleague, Marjorie Johnson

I first met Elaine Siegel when I attended the DMT Program at Antioch University New England in Keene, New Hampshire. She came to give a workshop in research and psychoanalysis. She had a very rigorous approach that I was drawn to. Afterwards, I chose an internship with Elaine, when she developed the DMT program at Suffolk Child Development Center (SCDC), providing individual and group sessions for children. At the time, it was unusual to offer children individual DMT paired with psychoanalytic technique. I was truly inspired but also somewhat intimidated. I soon realized that Elaine's high expectations were well supported by her excellent supervision and teaching. She was also an excellent administrator. After I completed the internship, Elaine created a job for me at SCDC, and I enjoyed working with her for another year, after which time she left to develop her private practice. In any subsequent job I had, either as a dance/movement therapist or a teacher, I used the training and development I received from Elaine as the foundation for my work.

Elaine always served the DMT community by pointing them toward the value of intellectual rigor, training in therapeutic techniques, and the understanding of the body. One of her biggest impacts on the field of DMT was combining the intuitive capacity of the therapist with rigorous training in psychoanalysis and dance to understand and create a therapeutic alliance with the patient. This provided the opportunity to foster deep understanding and change.

I will miss Elaine greatly and am ever grateful for her presence in my life. She set me on a new path when I met her, and I have always enjoyed the beauty of her friendship.

Anita Luck

is the daughter of Elaine Siegel. Her love of movement led her to become a professional ballet dancer. She danced with companies in the USA and Europe. Always striving to better understand human

movement, Anita first became an ACE Certified Personal Trainer and a Pilates instructor, and she is now a Fellow of Applied Functional Science (FAFS). The FAFS distinction means that she has studied the biomechanics of how the body moves, and has a deep understanding of how one area of the body affects another.

Michele Rose

LCSW, NCPsyA, ADTR, is a dancer/choreographer, and Dean of Faculty/Training at The Kentucky Psychoanalytic Institute. She was an associate professor in the department of Psychiatry at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine; director of Creative Arts Therapies at Youth Consultation Services (Newark, NJ) and a dance therapist at Suffolk Development Center (NY) where she had the privilege to work with Elaine Siegel. She has a practice in psychoanalysis and dance therapy in St. Louis, Mo. and Louisville, Ky.

Marjorie C. Johnson

M.Ed., is a Special Education teacher at the Brookville Center for Children's Services, Inc. LI, NY. She completed her internship in Dance Therapy with Elaine V. Siegel, Ph.D., at the Suffolk Child Development Center, LI, NY and received her M.Ed in Counseling and Dance Therapy from Antioch University. She went on to study at the New York Center for Psychoanalytic Training, NYC, NY. She was previously certified as a DTR and ADTR and provided dance therapy and psychotherapy to preschool and school age children at North Shore University Hospital Preschool Program, LI, NY and The Ecumenical Consultation Center, LI, NY.

Sabine Trautmann-Voigt

Ph.D., is a Psychotherapist for children, youth, and adults, single and groups, Dance/Movement Therapist (ADTR, BTM) and supervisory therapist, with a private practice in Bonn, Germany. She is Director of Cologne-Bonn Academy of Psychotherapy (kbap), and the German Institute of Psychoanalytic Dance and Expressive Therapy (DITAT), and has been editor of the "German Journal of Dance Therapy" for the past 20 years. She was instrumental in bringing Elaine Siegel to teach at her institutes and together with Bernd Voigt, wrote the book: "Analytical Dance/Movement Therapy" which was published in Germany. She has also written many articles and books on body language and psychodynamic psychotherapy.

Ellen Trost

is Business Affairs Manager at Cinedigm Entertainment in New York. She is Elaine Siegel's niece.