

In Memoriam: Arlyne S. Stark, 1942–2014

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Arlyne Sue Stark, a brave and distinguished leader in the field of dance/movement therapy (DMT), died of breast cancer in Denver, Colorado on November 17, 2014. She is survived by her husband James Mims, her son Dr. Jeffrey Samuels, and by

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untold people who benefited from her inspiring work as a dance/movement therapist, clinical supervisor, scholar, and mentor. The daughter of grocery store owner Harry Stark, and Lucille Stark, a Johns Hopkins Hospital administrative assistant, Arlynn Sue Stark was born in Baltimore and grew up in nearby Forest Park. After a promising dance career was cut short by an injury, relentless curiosity spurred Arlynn to seek ways of promoting healing from a range of human suffering. Early on, she found her way to a workshop led by Marian Chace, and the rest is history. Arlynn's service to the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA), including as its seventh president, began with the inception of the organization. As her longtime friend and colleague, Sharon Chaiklin wrote the memorial piece that follows, after gathering thoughts from others in the dance/movement therapy community regarding Arlynn's impact on our lives and our profession.

Reflections from Sharon Chaiklin

Too often we fail to realize the full value of someone's work and life until it is too late to share our thoughts and let them know of those special things that we found meaningful. When writing about someone whom we knew well, we may have to face just how much we took for granted. Arlynn Stark's death was a shock, even to those of us who knew her well, for she chose not to warn her colleagues in the dance therapy community about her illness. We have learned that she had planned to contact friends gradually, but suddenly she grew too ill to do so. In our minds, she was too young and far too vital for such a thing to happen—to her and to us.

Arlynn Stark's contributions to dance/movement therapy (DMT) began at the genesis of our profession and went on to include a wide range of involvements. While a dance student at the Juilliard School, Arlynn tore an Achilles' tendon and had to consider other career possibilities. In 1961, she heard about Marian Chace who was giving a three-week workshop about dance therapy at New York's Turtle Bay Music School and she decided to investigate. There, Arlynn made friends who later became the pioneers to organize DMT as a profession. Participants Beth Kalish, Claire Schmais, Debby Choate Thomas, and Lilijan Espenak all appeared to be struggling to understand what dance therapy was.

I first met Arlynn in 1964 at an organizational meeting in Washington D.C. where people interested in dance therapy joined to discuss what we were doing and how we might form an association. Those who had met Arlynn in New York remembered her as the "baby" in the class and as "the shy one." This perception would change significantly over the years.

The first meeting of the newly formed American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) was held in 1966 at the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center. Arlynn, who was then married to a Certified Public Accountant, was appointed as the group's first treasurer.



American Dance Therapy Association first meeting 1966; standing from L to R: Arlynn Stark, Elissa White, Stephanie Katz; sitting: Marian Chace, Sharon Chaiklin

Arlynn's dance therapy clinical work began when she launched a program at The Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital in Towson, Maryland. She left there to work at Crownsville State Hospital where I had begun working a few years earlier. We had interesting times together while developing our skills. Arlynn was a consummate learner and went back to school at that time to finish her undergraduate degree. As part of her studies, she and I collaborated on a project that involved me working with a patient while she observed and video-recorded the session. She wrote about her findings from this study, which assessed behavior change during DMT sessions: "[T]he defense of the psychotic patient's reaction to people in the environment [shows]...that initial contact is often times more easily established by a nonverbal method of expression" (Samuels, 1972, p. 51). In turn, we developed and utilized a modified observational check-off table based upon our learning of Laban's Effort Shape system.

Arlynn left Crownsville to return to Sheppard Pratt full time and to develop the program that remains as part of the larger hospital that exists today. Those were very busy years in her life. While working and studying, she also remained involved with the ADTA. She served on the by-laws committee and returned in 1976 for another term as treasurer.

Arlynn's next transition was particularly important. She began to create the curriculum and initiate the graduate DMT program at Goucher College. I recall spending an afternoon with her talking about what to include in such a program. We knew there had to be both a sound basis of theory and opportunity for clinical work.

Our discussion ended with uproarious laughter, for when we reviewed everything we had thought essential to the curriculum, we realized that it would likely take five years to complete; rather than a master's, it would have been a Ph.D. program. After some rigorous prioritizing, the new program opened in 1978, and served students well until it closed in 1994. Arlynne had earned a first master's degree—in DMT—from Goddard College. While directing the Goucher program, she returned to obtain a second graduate degree from the Johns Hopkins University College of Continuing Studies in Administrative Science. In addition to all this, she served the ADTA as vice president and then president, 1982–1986.

Arlynne is remembered more for her strong presence than as “the shy young girl” of those early years. Her workshops, teaching, clinical work, and supervision influenced many of us greatly. When speaking to colleagues about her of late, I have discovered how many experienced Arlynne as a motivating factor in their own work. When Arlynne left Sheppard Pratt to devote herself full time to the graduate program at Goucher College, Joan Lewin applied for Arlynne's prior position. Joan remarked at her own nervousness when leading a group to demonstrate her DMT skills:

From the moment we began gathering the group, she held us all in a strong, grounded, radiant embrace of presence...that made the group world safe, welcoming, irresistibly sustaining of playfulness, dance and feeling. She seemed to see in each one of us the gifts and abilities we did not know we had, emerging, if only tentatively, in our moving, laughter and sharing. (J. Lewin, personal communication, January 11, 2015)

Arlynne hosted at her home with aplomb and generosity numerous gatherings for both faculty and the ADTA Board of Directors. Each home she lived in reflected her creative flair. I recall the first lovely row-house where she had

collaged one wall with varied shades of purple tissue. Each succeeding home had special attributes that forecast her later artistic pursuits.

Arlynne poured her devotion and passion for DMT into the graduate program at Goucher where she continually sought to improve what was in place and provide students with the best possible, up-to-date learning. She willingly supported students through the difficulties they might either have brought with them or encountered in the process of completing an intensive program. Lynn Koshland, a student in the graduate program, recalled having met Arlynne at a DMT training institute at Naropa University in 1989, an experience that inspired her move to Baltimore for study at Goucher College:

I was struck by the way she seamlessly and intuitively led dance/movement therapy students through her classes, teaching us how to listen, to see, and to understand the group dynamic and process in such a profound way.... Once she simply walked through the middle of a group, began to snap her fingers, then moved to the edge of the room and waited. Her suggestion of rhythm and sound created space for the underlying themes to emerge and be developed. Arlynne's intuitive intervention provided the structure and support for the group's unfolding.... Her teachings continue to live on in myself and in the

many others who were also profoundly changed and inspired by her lessons, her wisdom, and her presence. (L. Koshland, personal communication, January 31, 2015)

Arlynn's term on the ADTA Board of Directors as vice president and then president (1980–1986), was a time of expansion and change. It was then that the National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies Associations (NCCATA) was formed. Always visible with her stately presence, her wit and her ability to communicate easily with those outside our organization, Arlynn relished the opportunity to reach out to other creative arts therapists in hopes of sharing knowledge and having a broader impact upon the mental health field. Susan Kleinman recalled Arlynn's unusual capacity "to take leadership with clarity and poise even in the midst of various challenging decisions such as facing the future of our credentialing choices in the 80's and considering an affiliation with the NBCC [National Board of Certified Counselors] in the 90's." Arlynn focused attention on developing jobs in new areas, while expanding awareness and recognition of DMT at the levels of both the state and the broader public.

Anything that was new excited Arlynn's interest, and she found time to learn through workshops and classes. She was certified in movement observation through the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in 1988, and attended numerous and varied workshops to learn about such other modalities as psychodrama and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR).

Jane Wilson Cathcart shared that:

[i]t was in 1997 at the ADTA conference in Philadelphia that Arlynn offered an amazing presentation on four relatively new modalities she had trained in. She was able to take dense and complicated material and simplify it... making the connections to our form of embodiment in DMT. Arlynn possessed a truly amazing ability to provide a holding environment while teaching. [She] liberally sprinkled all around with her kindness, calm, and wonderful sense of humor. (personal communication, January 26, 2015)

The list of Arlynn's publications is also varied, as she wrote—sometimes with co-authors, and other times not—about working with the aged and with bulimic patients, as well as about symbiosis, the use of verbalization, and assessments. Her understanding of the importance of protecting our history from being lost led to two vital articles for *American Journal of Dance Therapy* (Stark, 1980, 2002). One addressed the evolution of professional training in the ADTA, and in turn, the early development of the association (Stark, 1980), while a second article covered the history and evolution of the journal itself (Stark, 2002). Arlynn's awareness of how professions are built led her to assemble with Anne Fisher all the abstracts of DMT dissertations, master's theses, and special projects through 1990—a compilation which the Marian Chace Foundation then published (Fisher & Stark, 1992). Recognizing the value of this scholarship, the Foundation continues to compile the abstracts on a regular basis.

When the Goucher program closed, Arlynn expanded her private practice by developing her skills in the area of sexual assault and domestic violence, and

consulting with other mental health sites. In 1997, she remarried and left Baltimore to move to Evergreen, Colorado. She and her husband, Jim Mims, shared a love of hiking, scuba diving, and spending time on the beaches of the world.

She became a clinical supervisor at the Rocky Mountain Survivors Center in Denver, where she also provided staff training. Having physical problems, she gradually left the clinical field and turned her attention to other interests. She used Pilates and yoga to help herself and, in keeping with her usual *modus operandi*, eventually began to teach “gentle yoga.”



Arlynn also devoted herself to the pursuit of her creative and artistic abilities through several different modalities, products from which she generously shared. Early on, she pursued ceramics, and then papermaking—a process that allowed her to mold her media into a diverse range of forms. Later, she would also get involved in beading and jewelry making. In time, she was teaching again, and producing enough to show her work at an artist’s co-operative in Evergreen.

Arlynn was a loyal friend who maintained her friendships over the expanses of time and space. She was proud of her family, and made herself available to those who sought her wisdom and insight. Notwithstanding such sensitivity, she routinely displayed a spine of steel when encountering a problem she wanted to solve.

An earlier bout of cancer emerged and spread all too quickly. She was cared for and was with her son Jeff and husband Jim in her very brief stay in hospice.

In reviewing the totality of a life well lived, what more could anyone ask than to be respected for her ideas, work, compassion, intellect, creativity, wit, and loyalty. Arlynn Stark, our friend and colleague, will be warmly remembered for the impact she made on her profession and on the individuals served through it. Hers is a formidable legacy.

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