Joseph LoPiccolo (1943–2020)

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I met Joe in 1974, when he first arrived to take a Professorship at Stony Brook University (then called State University of New York at Stony Brook). He was joining the brand-new Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences department which was headed by its first Chair, Stan Yolles, M.D., who had been asked to create the Department of Psychiatry. Yolles was the prior head of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), having resigned under President Richard Nixon, and who had interest in expanding research into sexuality as well as sleep. Joe was attracted to Stony Brook in part because of Yolles' commitment to building the field. Indeed, in just a few years, the department included Richard Green, M.D., Richard Whalen, Ph.D., Diane Fordney-Settlage, M.D., Charles Doering, Ph.D., and Joe LoPiccolo, Ph.D., a talented interdisciplinary crew who, together with members of the Stony Brook psychology (Jim Geer, Ph.D., Jerry Davidson, Ph.D.) and sociology (John Gagnon, Ph.D.) departments, formed a remarkable environment for sex research and training. Joe offered me the postdoc position on his NIMH grant, and we worked together over the next 6 years. Notably, there was plenty of grant money from NIMH for clinical and basic sex research, as well as training postdocs. Years later, Joe would remark that it was a kind of golden age for sex research.

Joe was energized, fair, and eager to provide for the members of his rapidly growing team. When battles needed to be waged, he would not shirk but forcefully defend resources and spring for new ones. He continued to be funded with grants, wrote many articles, collaborated broadly, and was very generous with sharing credit and authorship. He was an unusually good writer and sensitive to language. He fostered a keen regard for clinical work and research and influenced many researchers and clinicians of that time, including many Stony Brook psychology students. He was unapologetic

about focusing on researching clinical outcomes long before the mention of evidenced-based treatments. This was not a popular position in academic research programs in psychology, where the lure to basic processes and mechanisms had been strong and important. Along with his commitment to sex therapy research was a balance of seriousness and a warm sense of humor. Joe was in demand on the workshop and talk circuit worldwide; his clear and colloquial style along with a strong research backing, made him popular and interesting to host. He was making important contributions and moving the field forward. And sex research then was hot—he was giving national and international talks at least three times/month.

On a personal level, Joe and his wife at that time, Leslie, who was an important and creative influence on the clinical ideas, were devoted to their son Joe Jr. and to having interests outside of work. Joe, to many student's dismay, was a hunter and shot ducks (deliciously served) in the winter, as well as a hunting trip to Africa. He regularly kept in practice by skeet shooting at his gun club. He played squash and racquetball. He hated the Long Island cold, and I learned the phrase, "It's colder than a rat's ass" from Joe—which I never heard before or since but have myself muttered during harsh winter days. He read a lot and often works of substance. Joe had a quick, responsive intelligence. I admired, respected, and liked Joe very much. I also have a personal ongoing gratitude to him for his kindness, smarts, humor, warmth, loyalty, and creating an environment in which my own research, separate from his, was nurtured.

Joe occasionally mentioned his father died at a young age and unexpectedly. He had that on his internal radar and perhaps it infused his life and contacts. We are all lucky to have known him. Especially fortunate are his most immediate family, including his remarkable and much-loved wife Cathryn Pridal, and his two sons, Michael and Joe. For the rest of us in the field, we owe him recognition and appreciation.

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