

Memorial Report

Dr. George W. (Bill) Fairweather

Feb 1, 1921 – Jan 24, 2015

Fresh off designing the Lodge program in the sixties, Dr. Fairweather moved to Michigan State University to establish the world's first Ecological Psychology Program. On July 25, 2015, a memorial service was held to commemorate Fairweather's success with both the lodge and his work at MSU. Many of Fairweather's PhD students, now innovative leaders in fields from mental health to public health to education gathered to share stories about their legendary mentor and friend.

C.C.L. Executive Director John Trepp was there to hear their stories. He reports that speaker after speaker repeated the most important lesson Bill ever taught them, "You aren't here to study psychology; psychology is only about science. You aren't here to study social work; social work is only about people. And you certainly aren't here to post some letters after your name. You are here to learn to use science to change the world, and make it a better place!"

Other things John heard:

"Bill taught us to be skeptical of 'studies' of human interaction. Most 'studies' are garbage because psychologists rarely understand the field of activity they are trying to study, and people working in the field rarely understand research technology."

"Bill taught us the 'TRUCK-TEST.' If an academic colleague wants to tell you about his brilliant, new idea, invite him over when you have a truck to unload. If he doesn't offer to help you unload the truck, his idea is probably no good."

"If you look up 'problem-solving' in the dictionary, there ought to be a picture of Bill."

"Bill was the 'Johnny Appleseed' of social sciences, spreading seeds to grow fruit he would never get to eat. And happy to do it."

“Bill and Betty adopted two dogs from the Humane Society. I pointed out that one of the dogs was blind. Bill said, ‘We know, but we don’t see it as a problem.’ ”

“I don’t remember a whole lot of what Bill said, but I remember how he made me feel. I couldn’t wait to get out and swing for the fences.”

“When I read (Fairweather’s 1968 masterpiece) *Community Life for the Mentally Ill*, it changed my life. I envy John’s career working with the lodges; he got to watch the movie.”