

Obituary

Maressa Hecht Orzack

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Maressa Hecht Orzack passed away 11 November 2010 at the age of 83. Dr Orzack was born in Boston, but spent her earliest years in Europe after which she returned to New York City. Dr Orzack graduated from The University of Rochester with a BA in psychology, followed by a MA and a PhD from Columbia University in experimental psychology. Originally trained as an experimental psychologist, she studied with three of the founders of what is now called radical behaviorism, BF Skinner, WN Schoenfeld, and Fred S Keller. In addition to earning her degrees, Maressa met her future husband, Louis Hirsch Orzack, at Columbia University. She followed him initially to Indiana University, then to Seattle University, and to University of Wisconsin, Madison. Despite the nepotism rule common at the time, she found research work or teaching at each of these places. In Wisconsin, she worked with developmentally challenged individuals in Central Wisconsin Colony, where she used operant conditioning techniques to teach them activities of daily living. Dr Orzack returned to Boston to work for 18 years as an Assistant, then an Associate Professor with Dr Conan Kornetsky and Dr Alan Mirsky at Boston University Medical School. She studied attention-deficit disorder in patients with schizophrenia, utilizing the continuous performance test. Maressa and Dr Mirsky co-directed a special contract mandated by Congress to look at the retrospective study of the results of different psychosurgery procedures. Observing a decline in 'soft money,' Maressa retrained as a clinician in cognitive behavioral therapy. She joined Dr Jonathan Cole at Harvard University's McLean Hospital, where they tested different psychotropic products for abuse liability. She specialized in cognitive behavior therapy and worked in the field of addictive behaviors, such as smoking, eating disorders, and addiction to chocolate. She subsequently was a Clinical Associate in the Psychology and Psychopharmacology Program, Coordinator of the Behavior Therapy Affective

Disease Program at McLean Hospital, and Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology, Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School. A longtime staff psychologist and founder of McLean's Computer Addictions Service, she founded Computer Addictions Therapy, <http://www.computeraddiction.com>. In the early 1990s, Dr Orzack was a major pioneer in clinical care and research in the field of computer and Internet addiction. Maressa became a major pioneer in the clinical care and research in the field of computer and Internet addiction. As she stated, 'I relied on my professional training starting with experimental psychology of learning, studies of recreational drug use, and my clinical training as a cognitive behavior therapist to set up a treatment protocol. It became clear that this was a complex problem, which has all the characteristics of impulsive and compulsive behavior, such as pathological gambling, OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder), sex addiction, eating disorders, and substance abuse. In addition, most of my patients were depressed; lonely, isolated, and often socially phobic ... The major problem in treatment is the same as for eating disorders. Abstinence is not an option. Computer use is ubiquitous ... The treatment needs to help people control their problematic computer activities in order to survive.' Dr Orzack created her own treatment protocol based primarily on the eating disorder model. Dr Orzack carried the message about Internet-enabled behavior to all ages. She met with parents, guidance counselors, teachers, therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and teenagers, just to name a few. She became the source that television, radio, and computer media called whenever there was a national or international news story involving computer addiction. She worked with the courts and lawyers creating a specific help group for men with Internet-enabled sexual behavior. 'Maressa was a valued member of the McLean community. She took a thoughtful and caring approach to everything, whether it was teaching, research, or clinical care. Her keen insights led her to develop a program that was way ahead of the curve,' said Philip Leventusky, ABPP, Director of Psychology.

On a personal note, Maressa was not only a distinguished psychologist but also a loving mother to her children Deborah S Orzack, Steven S Orzack (wife Ariane Cherbuliez), and Elizabeth Orzack Friedman (husband Joshua Friedman) and grandmother to Margot Elizabeth Friedman, Abraham Jacob Friedman, and Nora Cherbuliez-Orzack. She was predeceased by her husband, Louis Hirsch Orzack in 2003. A caring individual, she will be greatly missed.

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