

Douglas H. Frayn
1936–2015

There are many stories about Dr. Doug Frayn, associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Toronto, supervising and training analyst of the Canadian Psychoanalytic Institute, past director of the Toronto Institute of Psychoanalysis, former book editor of the *Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis/Revue canadienne de psychanalyse*, saxophone player, operetta singer, painter, and author, but a favourite has to be the one I heard very recently from a guest of the TPS who lived near Doug. This man was out walking a large sheepdog when Doug, whom he knew to be a senior training analyst, was coming home. The guest greeted Doug respectfully; the dog, however, immediately and with abandon jumped on Doug and began humping him rather aggressively. The guest shrank in embarrassment. Doug, nonplussed, exclaimed, “What a loving dog!”

Then there’s the story that an old friend tells of his trip with Doug to Las Vegas. They were packing to leave at the end of their trip and the radio in the hotel room was on. A Baptist minister was exhorting listeners, “Go down to Egypt!” Doug lit up: “This is a sign. We have to go to the Luxor Hotel and put our money on the table one more time.” They did and won enough for cab fare to the airport.

It seems appropriate to start a memoriam for Doug Frayn with humour, as humour was his stock-in-trade. His life was not easy, but his remarkable sense of humour never failed him. Even at the end, when I saw him in hospital hooked up to all kinds of tubes, hardly able to speak, and I was trying to cheer him (or myself) up, I found myself saying, “You’re doing good.” He whispered in response, “If this is good, I’d hate to see bad.”

Doug Frayn was born in Kingston, Ontario, the son of the deputy warden of the Kingston Penitentiary. His mother was a midwife, whom, he said with some pride, delivered Don Cherry—with whom he played hockey for some years. He completed his specialty training in psychiatry and

neurology at the Institute of Living, Hartford, Connecticut. He did his analytic training at the University of Toronto and was one of the original staff psychiatrists at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry.

Doug was the consummate psychoanalyst—wise, sensitive, and nurturing, but not afraid to speak his mind to his patients. He was also the consummate mentor. It would be hard to find a candidate in the Toronto Institute who had not benefitted from Doug's teaching. Many candidates chose him as their supervisor for their first case, as it was evident that he cared deeply about teaching them how to become a psychoanalyst.

One of our colleagues wrote to Doug's daughter, Cheryl, about him,

For me he represented an alloy of an Irish storyteller, a borsht-belt comedian, and Sigmund Freud. He was full of humour, a great jokester himself and a lover of good jokes, especially those that are politically incorrect. He disliked pretension in all its forms. And he was dedicated to psychoanalysis both as a clinical practice and as an intellectual tradition ... But most of all to me, Doug was a real mensch, that is a genuine, passionate, and caring human being. I will miss him.

Doug contributed to a number of scientific articles and books and was the author of *Musings behind the Couch*, *Understanding Your Dreams*, *Psychoanalysis in Toronto*, *The Clarke and Its Founders*, and *What Is Psychotherapy?* Although he had received many awards for his accomplishments and contributions to our profession, he told me that the finest moment in his career was receiving the Citation of Merit from the Canadian Psychoanalytic Society, a tribute to him from his peers.

As Doug became ill in later years and saw the effect on patients of their analysts dying while they were in treatment, he retired from active practice and confined his last several years of work to supervision with practising analysts. In my final visit to the hospital, four days before he died, Doug told me he was tired and wanted to go home.

One of Doug's favourite quotations was from Wilfred Bion: "He was loaded with honours and sank without a trace." Doug Frayn will not sink without a trace, as he is firmly in our hearts. As the past chair of the Library Committee, he endowed a continuing donation to our library while he was still alive. He has now made history: Doug has managed to have the Board of the Toronto Society and the Executive of the Toronto Institute decide to name the library after him. I can see him smiling with delight.

Sarah Usher