

At a meeting of the FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES on April 6, 2010, the following tribute to the life and service of the late Brendan Arnold Maher was spread upon the permanent records of the Faculty.

BRENDAN ARNOLD MAHER

BORN: October 31, 1924

DIED: March 17, 2009

Brendan Maher combined, in near perfect balance, extraordinary intelligence, restrained skepticism, an uncanny ability to detect foolishness, and an inspiring style of leadership throughout a long, distinguished career. Brendan added to this quartet impeccable integrity, a wry sense of humor, and a wisdom that colleagues, collaborators, and generations of students admired. Brendan was at home in both the laboratory and the seminar room. Many doctoral students found in Brendan the paramount example of teacher, advisor, and scholar, and junior faculty appreciated his belief that senior faculty had a responsibility to their junior colleagues.

Brendan's scholarship centered on the complex theoretical and empirical problems surrounding human psychopathology, especially the mental illness known as schizophrenia. One of Brendan's seminal contributions was to bring the experimental strategies of the laboratory to research in this domain. His 1966 monograph, *Principles of Psychopathology: An Experimental Approach*, which was reprinted many times and translated into several languages, was a transformational work. *Principles* provided the intellectual and methodological framework for what would become the field of experimental psychopathology. Brendan insisted on the inherent value of counting phenomena rather than rating them in a subjective manner. He preferred to quantify the precise level of motor control in the hand movements of a patient with schizophrenia rather than rely on a global or subjective rating. This strategy created a paradigm shift in psychopathology research, replacing description and speculation with quantitative methods. It also provided the foundation for contemporary efforts to link specific genes for schizophrenia to less complex phenomena that could function as endophenotypes that mediated between the symptoms of the disease and the biology to which the genes contributed.

Another major contribution was an explanation of delusional thinking. Brendan's interpretations of delusions reflected an ability to transcend popular assumptions. Rather than regarding delusions as bizarre expressions of madness, Brendan realized that, in many cases, a delusion was the patient's attempt to understand unusual personal experiences. In

other words, delusions were not false beliefs that arose from defective inferential abilities. Rather, they reflected the patient's efforts to make sense of anomalous personal internal or external experiences. A patient's subjective experience that his thoughts were being broadcast to others might therefore foster the delusion that the FBI had implanted a radio transmitter in his brain.

Brendan's scholarship included many empirical reports, nine books or edited volumes, and service as editor for a journal and several influential volumes. Brendan was instrumental in founding the Society for Research in Psychopathology in 1986 and served as its charter president.

He was born in Lancashire in 1924, but his parents came to England from County Tipperary, Ireland. Hence, it is appropriate that he left us on St. Patrick's Day in 2009. Brendan joined the Royal Navy as an Ordinary Seaman, rose to the rank of Lieutenant, and was the navigating officer in the lead minesweeper during the D-Day invasion of Normandy, clearing a path for the troops that landed at Sword Beach. With his wife's help, he chronicled that extraordinary day in a moving memoir, *A Passage to Sword Beach: Minesweeping in the Royal Navy*. During a later assignment to clear the mines from Rotterdam harbor, one mine exploded as he was removing it from the water and wounded him seriously. An MRI scan conducted later in life revealed that some shrapnel from that explosion remained in his body.

After the war, he attended Manchester University for his bachelor's degree and then went to the Ohio State University on a Fulbright Scholarship for his Ph.D. in clinical psychology. It was there that he met the woman with whom he spent a mutually gratifying 56-year marriage. He completed his clinical internship at the Illinois Neuropsychiatric Institute, an affiliate of the University of Illinois Medical School, where he worked under the direction of David Shakow, who was studying the nature of schizophrenia.

After serving one year as a prison psychologist back in England, Brendan returned to Ohio State as an instructor, then to Northwestern University, Louisiana State University, and then to Harvard in 1960 as a Lecturer in the former Department of Social Relations. Brendan left Cambridge for eight years, first to go to the University of Wisconsin and then to Brandeis University as professor of psychology and, in succession, Dean of the Graduate School and Dean of the Faculty. In a conversation shortly before his death, Brendan smiled when he spoke about his unusual position as an Irish dean of a Jewish-founded university. Brendan returned to Harvard as professor of personality in the newly reconfigured Department of Psychology, served as Chair on two occasions, and as Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences from 1989 to 1992. He retired in 2004 as the Edward C. Henderson Professor of the Psychology of Personality. He received an honorary degree from the University of Copenhagen in 1991, and the Joseph Zubin Award for Distinguished Research in Psychopathology in 1998.

Brendan Maher enjoyed the reputation of being an academic statesman of the first rank. He navigated the unpredictable straits of academia, while providing wise counsel to many colleagues, department chairs, university administrators, and students. This keen observer of the eccentricities of academic life wrote an essay on the meaning of quality in humanities scholarship titled *Facts, Irish Facts, Mythofacts, and Interesting Possibilities*, which has become “required reading” for administrators.

Brendan is survived by his wife, Winifred (Barbara) Brown Maher; five children; and five grandchildren.

Respectfully submitted,

Irving Gottesman (University of Minnesota)

Jill Hooley

Mark Lenzenweger (SUNY–Binghamton)

Richard McNally

Jerome Kagan, Chair