Stuttering Foundation of America

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In Remembrance
Harold E. Luper
1924–1996

Valued friend and supporter of the SFA Dr. Harold (Hal) L. Luper died on Saturday, June 8, while traveling in Portugal and Spain with a University of Tennessee-sponsored Faculty Foreign Language Program. Dr. Luper suffered an apparent heart attack.

Luper was Head of the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville from 1963–1986. In 1986 Hal resigned as Department Head and remained on the faculty for an additional eight years. He remained an active teacher-scholar and active member of the university community until his retirement in December, 1994. In 1992, he was a major organizer in the development of the Smoky Mountain Chapter of the National Stuttering Project (NSP).

Throughout his career Dr. Luper demonstrated a sustained record of scholarship and clinical and professional service. His 1964 well-known book, Stuttering: Therapy for Children (co-authored with Mulder), was for over 25 years the only available text devoted exclusively to the treatment of stuttering in children. His professional service was marked by Presidency of the Georgia Speech and Hearing Association, two consecutive terms as the President of the Tennessee Speech and Hearing Association, and membership on the Tennessee Board of Examiners in Speech Pathology and Audiology. He was a member of the ASHA Legislative Council and served as Vice-President for Administration, 1971–1973. Luper served as an Associate Editor of the Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders and on the editorial board of Journal of Fluency Disorders. His scholarship was marked by numerous publications in these and other journals.

Allied Medical Professions Learn About Stuttering

Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners and School Nurses Targeted by SFA

By June Campbell

The Stuttering Foundation has launched an educational program dedicated to the prevention and treatment of stuttering problems. The program aims to improve general awareness and educate the medical community about stuttering.

In 1996, the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) invited SFA to present a session at their annual meeting. The event was well attended and participants reported a highly positive response. The purpose of this effort was to inform medical professionals about the prevalence of stuttering and to encourage them to be more open to discussing and addressing the speech disorder with their patients.

Physician assistants and nurse practitioners who attended the session reported that they had more frequent interaction with patients than the physicians with whom they work. Many of them indicated they have recognized stuttering as a medical condition that requires attention from health care providers.

Stuttering Therapy: The Two Sides of the Coin

By Hugo H. Gregory, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, Northwestern University

Like the many teenagers and adults who stutter that I have known during my professional career, when I went for therapy at age fifteen I wanted to stop stuttering and speak fluently. This is a very natural desire, considering the frustration and embarrassment associated with the problem. My therapy at that time consisted of practicing an easier initiation of speech and the blending of words into phrases. At the end of four weeks of therapy, I was able to say to a new girl friend, "Pat // would you like to go // to the movie on Saturday night?" It felt so wonderful to experience relief from the fear of stuttering and, of course, to have greater self-confidence about speaking. This was my first introduction to what we now designate as a "speak-more-fluently" approach to the treatment of stuttering. Little attention was given to studying and changing what I did as I stuttered, for example, blocking voice flow at the vocal folds or closing my lips tightly and pushing hard when attempting words beginning with "P" or "B." The emphasis was on replacing stuttering with fluency.
The annual Stuttering Therapy: Practical Ideas for the School Clinician SFA Seminar proved again to be first class. This year it was held June 13-14 in Tampa, Florida.

Co-sponsored by the Stuttering Foundation of America and the University of South Florida, this year, the annual seminar, designed expressly for speech language pathologists in schools, was held at the Hilton Hotel in Tampa.

Over eighty school-based professionals heard and interacted with fluency experts and clinicians: Barry Guitar, Peter Ramig, Ed Conture, Bill Murphy, Charles Healey, Ellen Bennett, Ann McKeehan, Walt Manning, and Barbara Moore-Brown. Also, in attendance and involved in discussion groups were Richard Ham and Fred Murray. Arthur Guilford was conference coordinator. Barry Guitar is growing his hair out until he completes the second edition of his very popular first text book.

The last SFA seminar I attended, in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1991 I had the honor of having lunch with Dean Williams and Hal Luper. This year, Walt Manning delivered a moving tribute to the recently deceased Hal Luper to open the program. Dr. Luper dedicated his life to helping people who stutter. This year's participants made a generous contribution to the SFA in honor of Dr. Luper.

Several attendees praised the unique access to the presenters only experienced at an SFA seminar. Presentations are followed by small group discussions. Coffee breaks, lunches and a wine and cheese reception offered many other opportunities to rub elbows with the experts and network with other SLPs.

Several presenters included videotapes of therapy in action. Effective footage with school-age clients learning fluency enhancing techniques and strategies for dealing with emotional aspects such as teasing received rave reviews. Ellen Bennett presented a highly successful fluency program already operating in a school system.

This year's conference confirmed for me that one SFA conference is not enough. The format is getting better and better. Some of the biggest names in stuttering therapy are assembled. A lot of exciting things are happening in the schools. Schools, after all, are where stuttering therapy has to work.

Next year's conference will take place in Memphis, Tennessee. It will mark 50 years since Malcolm Fraser had an idea. I feel I was as noteworthy as one by that guy Edison! Rumor has it Elvis will reappear to be keynote speaker. I won't miss it for the world.
Stuttering Foundation Announces 1996 Journalism Awards Winners

The Stuttering Foundation of America announced its 1995-1996 Awards for excellence in reporting that furthers the public’s understanding of this complex disorder.

“We are very pleased by the increased attention that print and electronic journalists are giving to the causes and treatment of stuttering,” said Jane Fraser, president of the nonprofit foundation. “The numerous entries again this year clearly reflect that stuttering is receiving much more professional attention from the news media.”

Eight journalists in distinct categories are equally honored this year for their outstanding contributions. They are:

- Elizabeth Pagano of The Nashville Banner in Tennessee for her column “Be Patient If Listening to a Stutterer.”
- Fred Shuster of the L.A. Daily News in California for “Scatman: A Worldwide Celebrity...Really!”

Second place winner in the large print publication category, this entertainment news feature profiles the international recording success of John Larkin, a dance-pop artist who has sold millions of scat-singing albums. Mr. Larkin himself stuttered and mentions this in the lyrics of his songs.

- Mary Ann Mazenko of The Telegraph in Alton, Illinois, for “When Words Fail” and “Painful Memories Hard to Forget.”

Winner in the smaller print publication category, these two health section news articles discuss the tragic childhood experiences of a local woman who has become a speech-language pathologist because of misunderstandings by others concerning her stuttering difficulties. A companion article relates Dr. Edward Conture’s assessment that stutterers face complex life experiences despite being well within normal limits of psychological, social, and physical development.

- Kelly Wilson of The Quincy Herald-Whig in Illinois for “When the Words Don’t Come Out Right” and “Building Confidence Key to Helping Stutterers.”
- Pam Knepper of the Huntington Herald-Press in Indiana for “Stuttering: A Roadblock on the Way to Communication” and “Techniques Can Help Both the Speaker and Listener Deal with the Problem.”

Third place winner in the small print publication category, these front-page articles provide important suggestions on how those who stutter and their families can best deal with stuttering. The author notes that it takes over 100 muscles working in a smooth, coordinated manner to speak fluently.

- Ann Landers of The Chicago Tribune for her July 18, 1995, article that garnered headlines across the country. Winner in the syndicated columnist category, Ann Landers sends help to millions of readers as she replies to a letter from a woman who stuttered in Wichita Falls, Texas. In her unique style, Landers offers supportive advice and lets her readers know where to find information and assistance for this complex disorder.


Winner in the magazine category, this set of interviews with acting legend James Earl Jones and others who have succeeded professionally despite a stuttering problem is both inspirational and factually well-grounded. “I have no arrogance about my voice,” says Mr. Jones. “People say, ‘Oh, that voice.’ But that’s not the way I look at it. I’m just happy the words come out clearly, and I’m not only happy, I’m proud.”

Producer Denise Cramsey of Medstar Communications for her television segment with Metropolitan Opera star Robert Merrill and speech-language pathologist Jane Campbell.

Winner in the electronic media category, this segment focusing on the story of opera legend Robert Merrill was produced for TV news programs and reached some 250 subscribing stations.

Each of the Stuttering Foundation of America 1995-1996 first prize winners received a cash award of $250.00.

The Two Sides of the Coin

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When I returned home from this residential program, I was willing to practice saying words and sentences every day using what I had learned. However, after a few weeks, my new found fluency began to slip. When I felt tension associated with stuttering, the old fears began to get stronger again! A year later when I went back to review fluency skills, I began to realize that I was overly sensitive about stuttering and that this played a key role in my desire to hide it and do whatever I could to avoid it. I began to understand that all people tend to become sensitive about what is perceived as a problem.

When I went to Northwestern University to study “speech correction,” as the field of speech pathology was known at the time, I learned about another model of therapy known as the “stutter-more-fluently” approach. The objective of this method was to reduce the tendencies to inhibit and avoid disfluency and stuttering in one’s speech by monitoring, analyzing, and modifying stuttering, i.e., learning to stutter more easily, but not stop it! Whereas, my earlier work had focused on easier beginnings and smoother movements (speak more fluently model), I now began to study my stuttering and modify instances of stuttering as they occurred. I found voluntary stuttering helpful. On purpose, I would say, “I’m I’m Hugo Gre-Gregory.” I had learned how important it was to do these things that diminished my sensitivity about stuttering. At this point, therapy based on both speak-

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SFA and Northwestern University Workshop Celebrate Eleventh Year

The Memphis-based Stuttering Foundation of America and Northwestern University hosted their annual instructional workshop for speech-language pathologists specializing in stuttering from July 15 through July 26, 1996.

Each year, 20 speech pathologists from around the world with a special interest in stuttering are accepted to participate in the workshop. Under the leadership of Dr. Hugo Gregory, together with Diane Hill, June Campbell, Carolyn Gregory, and Scott Yaruss, the workshop is organized to focus on therapeutic skills and techniques for intervention with children and adults. This year's guest speaker was Patricia Zebrowski of the University of Iowa.

Workshop participants this year came from the United States, Canada, Australia, England, Bulgaria, Finland, Brazil, and Greece.

"The amount of information we've learned is tremendous," said Peter Tonev of Bulgaria and Evi Darili of Greece. They note that in Bulgaria and Greece, with far fewer speech pathologists, getting new ideas is difficult.

"We've gained new perspectives and are excited to return home with them," added Marybeth Allen of Orono, Maine, Deborah Poleshuck of Staten Island, New York, and Matt Ronayne of Los Angeles. Noted Marybeth, "I will be looking for more ways to involve parents in the therapy process."

Janet Brown of Camrose, Alberta, Canada, remarked, "I feel more confident about going back and talking with my boss about how to better meet the needs of children who stutter." Julie Budzynsky of Tempe, Arizona, and Delcie Halsey of Manasquan, New Jersey, hope to start a summer camp for children who stutter.

Marty Acutt from the Isle of Wight wrote, "The course has provided inspiration to go home and make up my own locally applicable fluency pack for colleagues on the island."

This unique workshop has gained international recognition for its excellence in the post-graduate study of stuttering.

For more information about this intensive workshop which will take place in July, 1997, write Dr. Hugo Gregory, Speech and Language Pathology Department, Northwestern University, 2299 Campus Drive North, Evanston, IL 60208-3570, or call SFA at 1-800-992-9392. Fellowships are provided by the Stuttering Foundation.

Led by Julie Budzynsky, Workshop gives their rendition of "I've Been Working on the Railroad"

The Two Sides of the Coin

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more-fluent and stutter-more-fluently approaches had helped. I was able to use easy relaxed initiations with phrasing: I was willing to stop myself during or after an occurrence of stuttering and repeat a word or phrase in a modified way.

As I progressed in my professional life, I began to recognize inadequacies of a therapy program based on either an avoidance reduction // stuttering modification or a direct fluency enhancing model. The stutter-more-easily approach may not result in post-therapy speech that is as normally fluent as it could be. On the other hand, building fluency may not reduce the fear of stuttering as much as is desirable. I began to combine the two models. I guided confirmed teenage and adult sufferers toward the monitoring of stuttering, changing and modifying it, the person learning to stutter more easily; followed by the monitoring of relaxed speech beginnings and smooth transitions between words with more adequate pause time between phrases and resistance of time pressure. In my clinical practice and teaching, I called this working with two sides of the coin: decreasing sensitivity to stuttering and disfluency in general, one side of the coin, and then building fluency, the other side of the coin. I adopted a gesture, pointing to the palm of my hand as decreasing sensitivity to stuttering and the back of my hand as building fluency, emphasizing an attitude of doing both continuously, as I turned my hand first one way and then the other! Obviously, people who stutter love to build fluency, but it is harder to work directly with stuttering which has caused so much pain. But, those who take the risk, usually with the help of a supportive clinician, soon find that getting insight into their stuttering and coming to terms with it, relieves a lot of emotional pressure, reduces stuttering and enables one to build fluency skills.

At an international meeting of people who stutter and clinicians in Kyoto, Japan, in 1986, the Scandinavian stutterers adhered to easy stuttering and you could hear them easing through occurrences of stuttering. The Australians who stuttered said, “We have the best fluency shaping in the world.” I thought that the Scandinavian stutterers at the meeting should be able to speak better, and the Australians admitted they had a great fear of fluency failure and felt as though they were walking on a fluency tight rope. More recently, Mrs. Gregory and I attended a meeting of Speak Easy of Australia and New Zealand where we found that stutterers who had been taught a fluency producing “smooth speech” approach were very interested in our techniques of studying stuttering, as well as fluency, and learning to “play with their fluency, disfluency and stuttering.” Evidently, in their therapy they had been expecting “super fluency,” and the idea of diminishing sensitivity and building fluency at the same time was fascinating to them.

More and more in the last 20 years, coinciding with my experiences, clinicians have been helping teenage and adult clients work with “both sides of the coin” in ways similar to those described here. In recent articles on therapy for elementary school-age children who stutter, most clinicians state that they use fluency shaping procedures first and then stuttering modification techniques to deal with more firmly learned residual stuttering behaviors. Intervention methods for preschool children rely mostly on fluency enhancing procedures, hoping that these children will not develop feelings that their speech is different or difficult.

Suggested reading:


Hal Luper Continued from page 1

Among his many outstanding contributions was Luper's service to SFA. His association with SFA began in 1959 when he attended the initial week-long SFA conference in Nassau. The proceedings from that conference were reproduced in one of its early publications, Stuttering and Its Treatment. Hal's prominent place among friends of SFA is permanently marked by his presence in one of SFA's most prized pictures. He stands on a beach in Nassau with Williams, Fraser, Ainsworth, West, Freund, Johnson, Sheehan, and Van Riper. Luper contributed to seven additional SFA publications and many other conferences. In 1990, Luper served as Local Arrangements Chair in a UTK/SFA cosponsored conference, "Stuttering Therapy: Innovative Models in Schools." That conference proved to be the blueprint for a conference that SFA has cosponsored with other universities and schools since that initial one in 1990. Luper's leadership was key to the success of this conference format and topic.

Over this past year in his retirement, Hal had been learning the Portuguese language. It was quite fitting that this master teacher was enjoying retirement as a student—continuing his love for learning. Ironically, upon his death he was on a University-sponsored trip to Portugal—the country of his birth.

Hal Luper was a master teacher, clinician, and scholar. In 1994 we lost three pioneers in the field of stuttering—Malcolm Fraser, Charles Van Riper, and Dean Williams. In 1996 we lost another pioneer in the field of stuttering—but we also lost one of our dearest friends.

—Pearl Gordon, Ph.D.