



The Milton H. Erickson Foundation NEWSLETTER

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INTERVIEW

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Wendel A. Ray, Ph.D.

by Roxanna Erickson Klein, R.N., Ph.D.
Dallas, TX



Wendel A. Ray, Ph.D.

Background: Wendel A. Ray, Ph.D., is a Research Associate of the Mental Research Institute (MRI), in Palo Alto, California, where for the past 12 years he has served as Founder and Director of the Don D. Jackson Archive. Ray also serves as Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy at Northeast State University in Louisiana. He is co-author or co-editor of five books and numerous articles on brief and family therapy. As a professor of marriage and family therapy, he teaches theoretical and clinical practice courses at the masters and doctoral degree level as well as supervising clinical training.

Ray, as readers will soon realize, has a passion for archival work. His own academic research has focused on studying and preserving the lifework

of a number of eminent contributors to the field of theory and psychotherapy. In August of 1999, he completed a three-month appointment as Visiting Scholar at the Archives of the Milton H. Erickson Foundation.

Roxanna Klein (REK): In addition continued on page 21

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Interview

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tion to your teaching, and to your work at the Jackson Archive, tell us a little about the current projects you are involved in.

Wendel Ray (WR): I am in the midst of a number of stimulating projects. A two-volume set of the selected papers of Don D. Jackson, M.D., which I have edited, is in the final stage of preparation. A project of equal importance is a book that Jay Haley and I are preparing, tentatively entitled, *Defining the Nature of Relationships: The Interactional Therapy of Don D. Jackson, M.D.*

Richard Fisch, M.D., Karin Schlanger, M.F.C.C., and I are co-editing a two-volume set of John Weakland's selected papers. In another project, two long-time collaborators, Gianfranco Cecchin, M.D., and Gerry Lane, M.S.W., and I will soon complete our third book together.

Just before his death, John Weakland placed all surviving audio recordings, transcripts of all team meetings, and all case material from Gregory Bateson's ten year long research projects, on paradoxes in communication processes, in my care. These materials are incredible! There are wonderful team meetings of Grégory Bateson, Don Jackson, Jay Haley, John Weakland, and William Fry. I am thoroughly enjoying the process of listening to and reading these materials as they are transferred to digital format. The Bateson Team materials are of monumental significance. My next major endeavor will be organizing and publishing the team dialogues. I hope to be able to include a set of audiotapes with this publica-

tion.

As Director of the Don D. Jackson Archive at MRI, I am in the process of transferring all audio, film, and written documents, housed there, to a computer based format. In addition to transferring audio recordings, new technology that allows me to transfer films to CDs. This permanently eliminates further deterioration of the quality of the recording. With many of my projects, I have benefited from the help of Graduate Research Assistants. David Govenor and Craig Moorman particularly deserve a note of thanks for their dedicated work ethic and technical expertise.

REK: Tell us about the work that you did last summer at the Milton

WR: At the invitation of Jeffrey Zeig, I was given a fantastic opportunity to spend the entire summer working in the Archives at the Erickson Foundation. The Archives house the most extensive collection of audio, video, and written documents from the life work of Milton H. Erickson, M.D. In addition, there is an extensive collection of video and audio recordings of virtually every significant theoretician and therapist in the field of modern psychotherapy. For me, this was a dream come true. The opportunity was significant to me as a therapist, a supervisor, and especially in my primary role as an academician.

The task given me was to develop a working knowledge of the materials in the Archive, particularly the audiotape and film recordings of Erickson. My next directive was to prioritize the materials in terms of urgency related to their fragility and need for preservation. A large number of audio recordings

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