Elizabeth Moore Erickson: *Une Vie Hors du Commun*

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On the 26th of December 2008, in Phoenix, Arizona an extraordinary life ended peacefully: a long life, fully lived, well-examined, enriched with depth, meaning and purpose. Harmony, Beauty, Truth, Passion, Simplicity and Complexity were all encompassed, enveloping one lifetime, that of Elizabeth Euphemia Moore Erickson. She died in bed at home, in the loving arms of her youngest daughter Kristina, a physician. Surrounding Elizabeth were Kristina’s daughter Joya, and Kathy Renee, her great-granddaughter by Albert, the Erickson’s oldest son. Four generations were together, united in a most sacred moment. Elizabeth died as she lived: full of grace and dignity, with joy and comfort in her surroundings. She left a meaningful personal and professional legacy, yet to be fully unfolded and appreciated for generations to come.

Collegue hors du commun¹

The extent to which Elizabeth played a supportive role in the work of her well-known husband, Milton H. Erickson, has gradually
Elisabeth Moore Enchom: Life, Loss, and Community

Mirrors, Images, and Existence: Reflections on Elisabeth's Life

On the 5th of December 2008, Elisabeth Ainsworth, a long-time friend and colleague, passed away. This event marked a significant loss in our community. Elisabeth was known for her profound wisdom, her gentle nature, and her deep commitment to helping others. Her influence extended far beyond her circle of friends, touching the lives of many in ways both subtle and profound.

Elisabeth's legacy is a testament to her character and her dedication to the community she loved. Her memory will continue to inspire us to live with purpose and compassion. As we reflect on her life, we are reminded of the importance of community and the role we each play in supporting one another.

 Collegues share in Remembering Elisabeth's Impact

The loss of Elisabeth has left a void that will be felt for years to come. Her spirit continues to inspire us, reminding us of the power of community and the importance of supporting one another through life's challenges.
been revealed by those close to her. Her own commitment to advance science was expressed through a scaffold she provided. Her largely behind-the-scene contributions facilitated and made possible the professional accomplishments credited to Erickson². In actuality, it was their partnership that nurtured the ongoing investigative climate that brought hypnosis forward as a legitimate medical tool. Both Milton and Elizabeth were in harmony with this construct, and together they brought forth the work that fostered both acceptance and knowledge of the applications of hypnosis to therapy and medicine.³

Elizabeth’s own interest in hypnosis began with a chance meeting with Milton during a seminar at the Academy of Sciences in the mid 1930’s. As a psychology undergraduate, she had attended the meeting with her brother in hopes of finding a summer job. Milton noticed her exceptional capabilities, and soon arranged for her to have a position in his laboratory that was normally reserved for doctoral students. As Director of Medical Research and Psychiatric training at the State Hospital in Eloise, Michigan, he was pursuing research on the potential for alteration of sensory stimuli through
hypnotic suggestion. Their first collaborative efforts involved the study of hypnotically induced color blindness and deafness.⁴

Committed to the scientific process and the discovery of knowledge, Elizabeth undertook her assignments with a passion. Her curiosity, phenomenal memory, and voracious reading, accentuated her value as a research assistant. Even late in life she could explain details of what was then known about the differential functions of rods and cones within the eyes. Characteristically, even in her 93rd year of life, she was able to read the newspaper or to thread a needle without glasses.

Elizabeth and Milton married on the same day she graduated from the University, the 18th of June 1936. She had been living at the home of her parents until then. Her father, an attorney, and her mother, a former teacher specializing in lip reading for the deaf, discouraged the marriage, hoping she would have the time to develop her own professional interests before taking on the lifelong responsibilities of a household. But Elizabeth was strong about her desires and her direction, and never once looked back⁵.

With marriage at 21, Elizabeth became mother to three young children, all under the age of seven. It was unusual in that era for a
that the cell surface epitope of the S1 envelope protein is recognized by the neoglycoprotein mimics of the S1 enve

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father to retain full custody after a divorce; she provided a welcome balance of maternal love\textsuperscript{6}. Together they went on to have five more children rounding out the family to eight. The children – Albert, Lance, Carol, Betty Alice, Allan, Robert, Roxanna and Kristina - were raised as a single entity of diverse interests each having unique skills and attributes.

Explorations with hypnosis were woven into everyday life, and as Elizabeth’s familiarity with the hypnotic processes grew, Milton continued to encourage her own explorations into trance. The observations she made became the inspiration and points of departure for further investigative studies. Her experiences, including five childbirths under hypnosis\textsuperscript{7}, in combination with the multitude of opportunities in daily life, added depth to Erickson’s work.

In nurturing her children, Elizabeth reflected back on what had been meaningful in her own life. Among her most poignant memories was that of her French-Canadian grandfather, Moise Blondin. Although only five years old when he died, she could sing – until the last day of her life - the French songs that the white haired long-bearded old man taught her. Elizabeth took a lot of pride in her ability to speak French, and in school learned the words to the songs her
enables a baby voice and makes us feel warm and safe. Together we work very well.

Islam often comes to mind when thinking of the family. The family is a place of safety and belonging. Moreover, the family is the foundation of society. Family ties - such as those between parents and children - are considered to be of great importance in Islam. The family is seen as an integral part of society, providing emotional and practical support.

and stimulates...
Grandpa had taught her phonetically. Each year she read at least one book in the French language. The combination of delight and discipline, dedication to hard work and enjoyment of the rewards of new learning set standards of life for the Erickson children.

Milton and Elizabeth were devoted to one another as personal and professional partners, never faltering in their mutual dedication to the scientific advancement of hypnosis. With Elizabeth's ongoing interest in hypnosis over the years she became his choice demonstration subject for teaching. As Milton became more widely recognized for his place in the advancement of clinical hypnosis, Elizabeth carved out her own role in this professional work.

Milton's work entailed travel throughout the Americas and Europe to teach professional courses throughout the 1950's and 1960's, both for the Seminars on Hypnosis and also for the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH). Elizabeth took pleasure in accompanying him, and particularly in meeting those individuals who brought new ideas to the discussion table, as Leon Chertok and Jean Godin in France. She had a lifelong friendship with Dr. Chertok, who had visited the Ericksons in 1966, and maintained friendly correspondence with Dr. Godin over many years. Indeed, she
developed lasting friendships with a large number of intellectuals, and valued those friendships throughout her lifetime. They included Margaret Mead, Aldous and Maria Nys Huxley, Jay Haley and Madeleine Richeport-Haley among many others. These friendships stimulated cooperative exploration and integration of information across disciplines. One occasion of which she was particularly proud was the time she viewed Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s films from of trance dancing in Bali. From within her own hypnotic trance, Elizabeth was able to comment about details of dancers movements to Mead, adding an in-depth perspective to Bateson and Mead’s important work.

During the interval of the 1950’s and 1960’s Milton carried on a full private practice; extensive teaching; organizational work with the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, and also edited the America Journal of Clinical Hypnosis for a ten-year period. After Milton passed on the editorship of the Journal to his successor, Elizabeth retained the foreign correspondence division for several more years. She recognized that her own diligence and special attention would encourage more growth in that area.
The family home, in which Milton's office occupied a room, was a hub of productivity. It was Elizabeth's participation in activities that permitted the actualization of their joint dream – the scientific advancement of hypnosis. She was integrated into nearly every phase of work: planning, arranging, orchestrating details and follow-up. Each child of the family learned the value of dedication to principles, to commitment, to the joy of hard work and to the frustrations that are inevitable in all work settings. Each learned valuable life skills of prioritizing, diligence, teamwork, and task delegation. Even the youngest children stuffed envelopes for the journals and licked the postage stamps.

Elizabeth was a fulcrum of balance between professional productivity and the climate of a loving family life. She actively coached the children on fundamentals such as to how and when to interrupt their father's work, how to talk with individuals of all levels of society, of appreciating elements of life both big and small, in every moment.

She enjoyed having groups come to the home-office in Phoenix to study, and during the late 1960's and 1970's Milton's increasing debilities due to post-polio sequelae resulted in a reduction of his
travel. With this grew an expanding interest in the home-office seminars that Milton taught. Elizabeth welcomed the week-long seminar students, and hosted in her home several including Jay Haley, Ernest Rossi and Jeff Zeig who studied for more extended periods of time.

As her husband taught and wrote, Elizabeth actively participated in the ideas, discussions, refinement, editing and proofreading, also authoring several articles\textsuperscript{11} as well as a section of the book \textit{Time Distortion in Hypnosis}\textsuperscript{12}. She has been formally recognized by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH) who granted her an Award of Merit and an Honorary Lifetime Membership in 1962. Again, in 1989, after a decade of outstanding work from within the Erickson Foundation, she was awarded their Lifetime Achievement Award for her enduring contributions\textsuperscript{13}. She continued that work for over 20 years after Milton died and only recently retired from her position on the Board of Directors. She was also very pleased to have received numerous honors and awards from foreign societies.

Elizabeth’s influence goes well beyond those few publications that identify her as co-author. It is woven into the nearly all of
However, with the focus on expanding interest in the home office, Elizabeth Monroe's work expanded and more recently, she has been involved in home conversion and design, focusing on models and styles that cater to the needs of the modern home. Her latest project, Ross and LeFevre, is a series of designs that aim to blend efficiency with style.

An inventive thinker and writer, Elizabeth maintains a keen interest in the intellectual and practical aspects of home design. She is currently working on a project that explores the integration of technology and sustainability in the home environment. Elizabeth also serves as a board member of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), and her contributions have earned her recognition for her innovative ideas and thoughtful approach to home design.

With her expertise, Elizabeth has become a sought-after consultant, offering valuable insights and guidance to homeowners looking to create a space that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing. Her influence is far-reaching, and her work continues to shape the future of home design.
Erickson's work, and it is attested to by the numerous professional dedications made in her name. Elizabeth Erickson's contribution to the advancement of the scientific investigation of hypnosis lies in a deep commitment to inspire others to go beyond where they otherwise may have stopped to rest. Her inspiration to those who have forged ahead and brought forth new views on hypnotherapeutic processes has encouraged progress in a way that few others have done\textsuperscript{14}.

When Marilia wrote *A Tribute to Elizabeth Moore Erickson* \textsuperscript{15} Elizabeth initially shied away from the attention. As a clearer picture of her contributions began to unfold, a resolve to follow through was ignited. Elizabeth was captured in the dual stance she had served in for her entire professional career: that of behind the scenes work coupled with encouraging other professionals to move forward on their chosen path. Each chapter of the book gave opportunity to view this dynamic, *uncommon* woman from another person's eyes, as well as to hear of the multitude of stories on how Elizabeth's influence had inspired and guided their own life. Then it became a guiding light of its own, re-directing the professional life of the author, and later of the underprivileged students who are beneficiaries of the scholarship
established through Teresa Robles at Centro Ericksoniano de Mexico, in Elizabeth Erickson's name\textsuperscript{16}.

As the years took a toll on her husband, Elizabeth's dedication to his spirit and to his work continued\textsuperscript{17}. When he became confined to a wheel chair in his later years, she became an attentive caregiver, facilitating his ongoing work, which continued on until his death in 1980\textsuperscript{18}.

Those who had the privilege of contact with Elizabeth best remember her for her incomparable positive outlook on life. She never missed a chance to extend her own knowledge about the capacity of the human mind. Her avid enthusiasm for reading, her precision as a proofreader, and her unquenchable thirst for understanding continued throughout her lifetime. In conclusion, we honor and thank Elizabeth Euphemia Moore Erickson for her innumerable contributions to the study of hypnosis. And in so doing give recognition to the undeniable role that she provided in supporting and advancing Milton Erickson's ability to make his well known contributions. Beyond that, she touched everyone she came in contact with in an unforgettable way. Her style and grace reached into many lives\textsuperscript{19}. 


4 Baker, M. Ibid. p. 51

5 Baker, M. Ibid. “La Danse” pp. 53-54.

6 Read Lance Erickson’s (second oldest son) memorial tribute at: www.erickson-foundation.org


16 For further details of the Scholarship Fund, please go to: www.erickson-foundation.org


19 Read further about Elizabeth Erickson and the significant ways family, friends, clinicians, students from all over the world were affected by her at: www.erickson-foundation.org