

Dr. Harold Yuker: Eliminating Barriers

Presented by Hofstra University Library Special Collections

Early Years and Education

Harold E. Yuker was born in Newark, New Jersey on April 15, 1924, with cerebral palsy. The son of a baker and a seamstress, Harold attended a grammar school in Newark for disabled children. As he once recalled, "My Grammar school was called - and they wouldn't dream of doing it today - the Branchbrook School for Crippled Children." He attended a high school in Newark in which he was the only disabled student. Although he never expected to go to college, he was determined to contribute to and compete in larger society.



Harold as a child

Harold's motto was, "The most important thing for a disabled person is to learn to get along in a non-disabled world."

Early Years and Education

Unable to find employment after graduating from high school, he was sent to college through the New Jersey State Rehabilitation Commission. He went on to graduate cum laude with a B.B.A. from the University of Newark in 1944. He began taking psychology courses at the New School "for the heck of it," and was offered a fellowship for graduate study.

While doing graduate work at the New School for Social Research, he learned of a position as a psychology lecturer at Hofstra. He went on to receive a Master's degree in Psychology from the New School in 1950, and his Ph.D. in psychology from NYU four years later.



Harold with his parents in New Jersey

Early Years and Education

Harold credited his parents with raising him to be independent and self-reliant, despite his physical disability; "In the first place, they accepted me and loved me as a person, not a handicapped person. I learned to think of myself as a person and not a cerebral palsy victim."

Some personal items included in the Harold Yaker collection in the Hofstra University Archives reveal that he was a restaurant "connoisseur" who enjoyed keeping records of the restaurants he dined in, reading mysteries and collecting bookmarks.



Harold with his mother

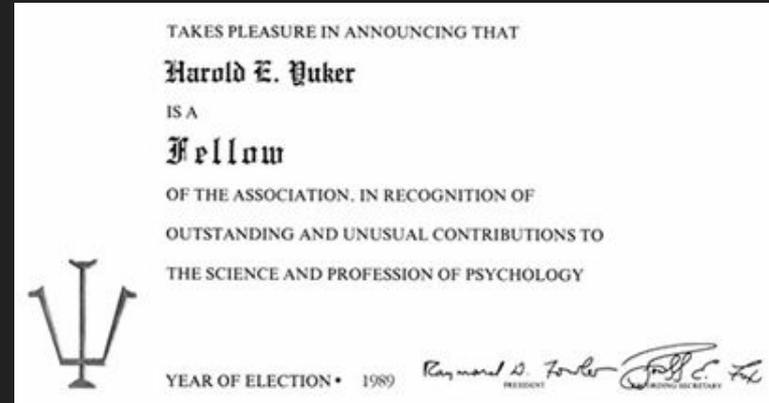
Awards and Recognition

Dr. Yuker received widespread recognition for his research relating to attitudes toward the disabled and his contributions to education. He received the Award for Outstanding Research Contribution from the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association in 1970, in recognition of his work with the Attitudes Toward Disabled Person's Scale.

In 1980, he received the Annual Presidential Award of the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine for his "life-long contribution as a social psychologist, scholar, researcher and educator", and in 1981 he was presented the New York State Psychological Association Kurt Lewin Award for contributions to social psychology.



Dr. Yuker receiving an award at Hofstra



Dr. Yuker's citation from the American Psychological Association

Awards and Recognition

In recognition of his devotion to teaching, he received the James E. Allen Award for Distinguished Service to Education in 1982. In 1988, he was presented the Award from the Institute of Scientific Information, recognizing the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale as the most cited publication in its field. In 1989, he was named a fellow of the American Psychological Association, and in 1991 he received the Roger Barker Distinguished Research Award from the American Psychological Association.

In addition to the many awards and citations he received throughout his career, Dr. Yucker was recognized in "Who's Who" and American Men of Science for his research contributions.



Dr. Yucker was presented with The James E. Allen Award for Distinguished Service to Education in 1982. As written on the citation he received, "Your research, your writing, and your exhortations have changed attitudes and increased public awareness toward the disabled and have created opportunities for handicapped persons where none existed before. Your nationally recognized research efforts to make facilities available to the handicapped have helped make New York State a leader in this important movement."

Research and Publication

As a researcher, Dr. Yuker focused primarily on attitudes toward and perceptions of individuals with disabilities. As he once explained, "Attitudes toward disabled persons are complex and multifaceted. Many perspectives are possible. Data indicates that it is difficult to measure, change, and even to understand attitudes toward disabled persons. Even though these things are difficult, they must be done in order to improve the quality of life and status of persons with disabilities."



Dr. Yuker being interviewed by WGBB

Research and Publication

In 1956, while doing research at the Human Resources Foundation, a division of Abilities Inc., he developed a research program focusing on attitudes toward disabled persons. He developed a measure of attitudes called the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale, which became the basis for future research and publications.

The ATDP scale was first published in 1960, and an extended monograph based on the scale was published in 1966. In addition to assessing attitudes toward disabled persons, the ATDP scale was intended to be used to evaluate mainstreaming in schools and the employment of individuals with physical disabilities.

A SCALE TO MEASURE ATTITUDES TOWARD DISABLED PERSONS
H. E. Yuker and J. R. Block

all ages /27

Purpose: Assesses attitudes toward disabled persons. Used to evaluate mainstreaming in the schools, hiring of disabled persons and methods of changing attitudes toward the disabled.

Description: Multiple-item paper-pencil inventory assessing the attitudes of either disabled or nondisabled persons toward disabled persons. Useful with teachers, employers, counselors, physicians, and students who are involved with disabled individuals. Available in three forms, one form containing 20 items and two forms containing 30 items, including Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew, and Spanish. Self-administered. Suitable for group use.

Untimed: 10 minutes
Range: Student-adult
Scoring: Examiner evaluated
Cost: Free.
Publisher: H. E. Yuker

*Hofstra University
Hempstead, NY 11550*

The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale

Research and Publication

His book, *Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities* was published in 1988. Dr. Yucker's long list of publications includes several research monographs, journal articles, research reports, book reviews and edited books. Based on his interest in higher education, Dr. Yucker completed 40 research reports and several monographs dealing with faculty workloads and productivity.



Dr. Yucker at his desk at Hofstra

Faculty and Administration

Despite being advised that his disability would prevent him from obtaining a teaching position and encouraged to pursue a career in research, Dr. Yuker applied for a position as a psychology lecturer at Hofstra in 1948. He was hired, and began a long, successful academic career at Hofstra.

As he explained, "Sure I was interested in research, but the trouble was that I really loved teaching." Discussing his teaching experiences, Dr. Yuker explained, "Students were aware of my disability on the first day of classes, but by the fourth day they were forming their own opinions of my teaching disregarding the fact that I was disabled."



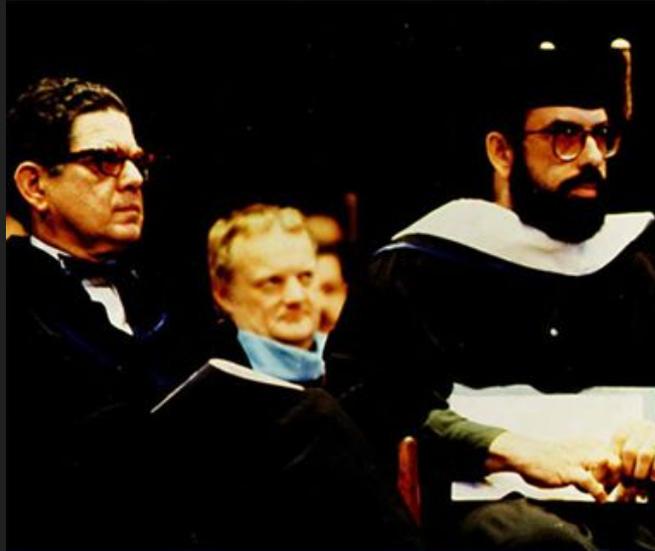
Dr. Yuker with President James Shuart and George Dempster



Dr. Yuker teaching at Hofstra

Faculty and Administration

Dr. Yuker became a full professor of psychology in 1964. During his time at Hofstra he taught over 25 different undergraduate and graduate courses and worked extensively with students on research and dissertations. He established and directed three centers at the University, and served as the director of the Graduate Program in Psychology.



Dr. Yuker with Francis Ford Coppola at Commencement Ceremony

Faculty and Administration

In 1965, he became the Director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education, where he developed a research program to study the different aspects of higher education. After serving as Associate and Interim Provost, he was named Provost and Dean of Faculties in 1973. He served as Provost until 1982, when he founded the Center for the Study of Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities. He served as the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence from 1990-1991.



Harold Yuker greets President Gerald Ford, 1989

Special Projects - PHED

Among his most significant contributions to Hofstra was the campaign to make Hofstra one of the first private campuses in the United States with complete structural accessibility to the physically disabled. Dr. Yucker played a major role in the initiative to make Hofstra's campus facilities 100% "barrier-free" to students and faculty with disabilities.



A photograph used in the PHED campaign

Special Projects - PHED

In the early 1960's the University began ambitious efforts to build ramps, elevators, accessible parking and modified restrooms and water fountains. The Program for the Higher Education of the Disabled (PHED) was formally organized in 1963, and by 1981 Hofstra was the first private university in the country to have complete program accessibility to people with disabilities.



Dr. Yuker with Henry Viscardi and Bernard Fixler

Yuker Reference Library

In recognition of and appreciation for more than forty-five years of dedicated service to Hofstra, the University named the Harold E. Yuker Reference Library in his honor in 1995. At the time of his death in 1997, Dr. Yuker was a distinguished professor of psychology and a founding director of the Center for the Study of Attitudes Toward Persons With Disabilities.



Dr. Yuker at his desk at Hofstra



An artist's rendering of the Yuker Reference Library at Hofstra