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## Preface

by

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“Very few people in this world have had the rewards and privileges I’ve had on my job. One of the deepest satisfactions I can imagine is to know and work with people who have decided to face up to their handicap, who are tired of running away and have decided to do the things that they most fear.”

— Einer Boberg

“His life was gentle and the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up And say to all the world, “This was a man!”

— Julius Caesar Act V Sc v

Quoted to describe Einer Boberg by Bob Manning, Elk member and founding member of ISTAR board, and by Michael Niven, former client

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**E**iner Boberg was a teacher, clinician, researcher, and leader extraordinaire; but above all, he was a man of great humility with a profound interest in people. Einer was richly gifted with the ability to inspire enthusiasm in his students, clients, and colleagues and to unite those with disparate views to work toward a common cause. He had a deep but pragmatic intellectual curiosity and a passion for excellence. His life experiences with stuttering provided the basis for his commitment to people who stutter and his enduring desire to alleviate their suffering and advance the science of treatment.

Einer was a child of the great depression, born in July 1935. He grew up on a wheat farm in a Danish community in southern Alberta and attended a one-room school. He stuttered so severely that the only creatures with whom he could talk freely were the farm cats and dogs. Rather than face the teasing and embarrassment of a new set of classmates in the city high school, Einer decided to quit school after Grade 9 to work on the family farm.

A year later Einer’s father watched him driving the grain swather and waving his arms wildly, oblivious to having left a piece of equipment behind: Einer was conducting an imaginary performance of Handel’s Messiah. His father suggested that a profession in music might be more suitable, so off Einer went to a Lutheran boarding school to complete his high school education and take violin lessons.

At that time, stuttering therapy was in its infancy. Einer’s parents had consulted the family doctor, who said that he would outgrow it. His adviser in high school suggested prayer.



Deborah Kully



Marilyn Langevin



Julia Boberg

Despite advancing age and many prayers, the stuttering continued. Einer tried a therapy program in Washington to no avail, and then an intensive clinic at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The latter helped, but within a few months he had relapsed. Once more he took the Greyhound bus to Minneapolis, armed with pencil and notebook to write down where he wanted to go, since speech was impossible. This time results lasted longer, but a second major relapse brought him lower than ever before.

During this relapse, Einer decided the only way to overcome his stuttering would be to enter speech-language pathology and dedicate himself to studying the problem while also working on his own speech. He took his MA at the State University of Iowa in 1963 and his PhD at the University of Minnesota in 1968. In 1971 he became Chair of Speech Pathology and Audiology at the University of Alberta. Here, in addition to forging a new direction for a fledgling department, he began an experimental therapy program which led eventually to the founding of the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) in Edmonton, Alberta.



Einer was an inspired teacher and a role model for clinicians and clients. As professor at the University of Alberta and invited lecturer in many other centres, he sparked intellectual interest in stuttering in hundreds of students. With humour, gentleness, and enthusiasm, he was able to foster critical thinking and scientific analysis in his students, yet develop their understanding of the inner world of the stutterer. A former student wrote:

“As our university professor, he touched us in a way that few professors do. He went beyond the textbook to take us into the psyche of the person who has a communication disorder. He shared with us his moving life story as one who lived with a stuttering disorder. He invited us to share a glass of wine in his home where he led us in a discussion of issues related to stuttering. He sent us into the community to pose as stutterers, to observe and experience people’s reactions to stuttered speech, so that we could better understand the world of the stutterer. Through all of this, he taught us empathy - one of the most important attributes of the helping professional. As a teacher and mentor, Dr. Boberg touched the lives of hundreds of speech-language pathologists over the years.”

— Susan Hall, former student

Einer had a deep compassion for the plight of clients. Yet he maintained an objective approach, knowing that each client had experiences, needs, and responses similar to and different from his own. Einer’s greatest joy came in watching clients discover their ability to change and seeing the profound changes in speech and attitude they made. He epitomized someone who could view difficulties as challenges and turn obstacles into opportunities. His eternally optimistic attitude and objective problem solving approach inspired many. In the words of one of his clients, “He is a healer in the true sense of the word: not just the body, but the whole person.”

To say that Einer was a clinician is a bit of a misnomer. In truth he was a clinician-researcher. For him and those with whom he worked closely, there was no dichotomy. Einer’s clinical work was research driven and his research was driven by key clinical questions: Why were therapy gains so short-lived? What could be done to make therapy more systematic and successful? How could the post-therapy experience be changed to give lasting results? Why do some clients maintain clinical gains with relative ease while others relapse? Einer adeptly integrated personal relapse experience with rigorous scientific methodologies. For the principles and methods of the earliest version of the ISTAR program, Einer drew heavily on clinical research conducted in Australia and the USA. Behavioral methodologies to shape fluent speech were later integrated with strategies to address avoidance reduction and attitude change, as

embodied in the Comprehensive Stuttering Program (Boberg & Kully, 1985). Einer believed that preparing clients for posttherapy maintenance was crucial, and that the program should be continually evaluated and improved on the basis of clinical and research findings.

Einer Boberg produced more than 35 publications and made over 60 presentations to professional groups in several countries and received McCulla and Killam professorships from the University of Alberta. His work provided vital leadership in many areas. His original investigations into fluency maintenance, neural mechanisms underlying stuttering, and long-term outcomes of treatment focused attention on key issues and influenced the direction of subsequent research. Roger Ingham provides a thoughtful analysis of these clinical and research contributions in the introduction to this journal. Einer also provided leadership in many other ways. He was elected as first president of the International Fluency Association. He was invited to Kuwait to establish a speech-language pathology program now being implemented at Kuwait University. He served on the Executive of the Speech and Hearing Association of Alberta and the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists and received Honours of the Association from both organizations for his contributions to the field of speech-language pathology. As Jaan Pill describes in his article, Einer also played an instrumental role in the development of the self-help movement in Canada.

Einer’s vision, enjoyment of challenges, and commitment to people who stutter influenced many. He wanted his colleagues, students, and clients to excel, to pursue their goals, and share their special knowledge. He would have been particularly pleased to know that a cadre of his colleagues has come together to create a publication in honour of his work.

This special issue of the *Journal of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology* is a memorial tribute to Dr. Einer Boberg. The collection of articles has special significance, as they represent topics related to Einer’s clinical, research, and self-help interests, and the authors were colleagues or clients whom he held in high regard. The aim of this special issue is to provide scholarly but clinically relevant information on treatment issues, the implications and future directions of research into brain mechanisms underlying stuttering, and the development of self-help organizations in Canada and around the world. The material should be of interest to students, clinicians, researchers, and people who stutter.

In the introduction Roger Ingham provides a historical overview of Einer’s career. He offers an account of the multiple influences that shaped Einer’s work and describes the nature and significance of his contributions in the areas of maintenance, neuropsychology, clinical research, and clinical service. William Webster presents his theoretical model of brain mecha-





Rosalee Shenker

nisms associated with stuttering, summarizes the supporting research, and discusses how the model provides theoretical support for contemporary approaches to stuttering treatment. Rosalee Shenker provides an overview of issues in assessment and treatment of stuttering in young children. After discussing the rationales, clinical techniques, and reported outcomes for early interventions, she concludes with some questions clinicians may consider in choosing a treatment for early stuttering. Ann Meltzer approaches her topic from the perspective of meeting the individual needs of clients with diverse abilities and symptomatology. She provides an overview of treatment approaches and a discussion of strategies in widespread use, identifying issues that may assist clinicians in selecting strategies that match client needs. Her paper concludes with a comprehensive discussion of various issues clinicians need to consider in treating clients. Robert Kroll and Luc DeNil report on their investigations of the neural substrates of stuttering using positron emission tomography. After providing an overview of treatment approaches and procedures for functional brain imaging, the authors summarize results of their own neuro-imaging studies which investigated differences between stutterers and nonstutterers and the effects of intensive treatment on brain activation patterns. In the final paper, Jaan Pill adds a client's perspective to the contributions Einer made to the treatment of stuttering. He also elucidates the role Einer played in the national and international self-help movement and provides a discussion of the definition, membership, and role of speech professionals in self-help groups.

It seems impossible to close this preface without a return to Einer. We believe that if Einer had to pick one contribution of which he was most proud and one that was closest to his heart, it would be the co-founding of the Institute for Stutter-

ing Treatment and Research in 1986. The original concept of the Institute was to provide a context in which clinicians and researchers would be brought together to exchange ideas, collaborate on clinical research, and critically evaluate clinical programs and strategies. The overriding aim was to provide the best possible treatment for children and adults who stutter. Since its inception, the Institute has treated more than 800 children, teens, and adults who stutter and trained over 200 students and clinicians. Clients and trainees have come from Canada, the USA, Europe, the Far and Middle East, and South Africa. Staff work tirelessly to train, treat, conduct, and disseminate research and educate the public. They continually evaluate and enhance the Institute's therapy programs for children, teens, and adults. Their commitment is a living testimony to Einer's enthusiasm, his delight in exploring new ideas, and his ability to make the impossible seem possible. Finally, it is not possible to leave Einer without mention of his family, wife Julia and sons Charles and Peter, who gave Einer the love, support, and joy that were his foundation.

It has been our pleasure and privilege to participate in the production of this special issue. Our gratitude and appreciation go to Dr. Rosalee Shenker who conceived the idea and assumed the considerable task of coordinating the issue, Dr. Elizabeth Kay-Raining Bird, editor of *JSLPA*, and Suzanne Fraser, managing editor of *JSLPA*. Finally, we wish to thank the people who contributed articles in honour of their friend and colleague, Einer Boberg.



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