

**In Memory of Ted Carr**  
**To be printed in the next issue of the *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research***

Members of the intellectual disability community are stunned and deeply saddened by the tragic death of Dr. Ted Carr and his wife, Dr. Ilene Wasserman. Ted was the personification of the Yiddish mensch – a man with unquestioned and unquestionable integrity, fortitude, and honor. Three of his virtues were being a brilliant scientist, a passionate advocate, and a beloved friend.

Ted was Leading Professor in the Department of Psychology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. With a specific focus on autism, he was a prolific researcher for over three decades, serving on the editorial boards of 17 journals. He received distinguished research awards from multiple national organizations (e.g., American Psychological Association, Behavior Analysis Division; Autism Society of America; The Arc of the U.S.). His research, along with that of his colleagues, led to the development of functional behavior assessment and positive behavior support (PBS). One of his many seminal publications was a book published in 1994 entitled *Communication-based Interventions for Problem Behavior*. Ted was pivotal in transforming PBS from a technique to a field through his founding and presidency of the Association for Positive Behavior Support and his founding and editorial leadership of the *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*.

Ted's brilliance as a scientist fueled his advocacy passion to reject vehemently the status quo as being "good enough." In partnership with the Autism Society of America he delighted in translating research into reader-friendly articles in their newsletter, *Autism Advocate*. His advocacy message, like all of his work, was laser-focused – it is imperative that the field of autism embrace quality of life as the desired outcome of "living with autism" as it pursues developing a model for "recovering from autism." His burning priorities to actualize quality of life outcomes were providing concurrent multi-component interventions – supporting families to address their needs, building responsive service systems that provide evidence-based and preference-based supports, integrating and calibrating biomedical and behavioral approaches, and translating research-based knowledge for the benefit of individuals with disabilities, families, and practitioners.

Ted's personal qualities endeared him to us all. He could invariably be counted upon to bring both elucidating insight and hilarious humor to every encounter. He offered the epitome of positive reinforcement in his generous affirmations of others' contributions as they embraced the mission of enhancing quality of life for people with disabilities. He also applied searing critiques to those who denied full citizenship or inflicted pain in the name of behavioral support.

Ted's words are more powerful than mine in capturing his vision. In correspondence with him about 2 weeks before his untimely death, he shared these thoughts:

The important thing is to help individuals with ASD and their loved ones to achieve a good quality of life together, a meaningful journey across the lifespan, an endpoint characterized by self-respect, independence, and community acceptance....PBS is not about abstract science; it is about lives – lives that demonstrate possibilities rather than liabilities.

Ironically, Ted also shared with me his own views of death and immortality a few weeks before he died:

Death occupies only a single point in time, but life lived with purpose engenders beautiful memories and teachings from which many thousands will benefit over protracted periods of time. The key is to transform tragedy into hope....A “good name” is one thing that can never pass away.

Ted, our most respected mensch, we will commit to transforming the tragedy of your death into hope. Indeed, your good name will *never pass away*.

Ann Turnbull