



# Special Message from APT

## Honoring a Play Therapy Legend



It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Dr. Charles E. Schaefer, co-founder of the Association for Play Therapy and Professor Emeritus of Psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University (conferred in 2008). Though his work was extensive and highly regarded by those in the field of play therapy, earning him the title the “Father of Play Therapy,” Charlie has been described as being humble and modest. He was as much of a friend as he was a mentor to those who had the pleasure of knowing him.

He first envisioned the Association for Play Therapy and co-founded APT with Dr. Kevin O'Connor in New York in 1982. They had one goal in mind: to provide a forum for professionals interested in developing interventions for children that leveraged the powers of play as an integral component of the therapeutic process.

Charlie served on the APT Board of Directors from 1982 until he was conferred APT Director Emeritus status in 1996. That same year, The Association for Play Therapy honored him with the Distinguished Service Award, and in 2006 the Play Therapy Lifetime Achievement Award. In an interview from 2011, Charlie expressed that “one of the most gratifying things in life is to see a project that you initiated a number of years ago come to fruition and see it blossom and flourish, which APT has done.”

Charlie began his journey in the field of play therapy by authoring the book *Therapeutic Use of Child's Play* in 1976. Since then, Charlie authored or co-authored well over 100 research articles and authored, co-authored, or edited 83 professional books. His final pieces of work will be published in upcoming editions of *Play Therapy™ Magazine* and the *International Journal of Play Therapy®*.

The epitome of a true leader, Charlie always walked with grace and humility, and his memory and legacy will live on through all of us. His playful spirit will forever be the foundation and driving force of APT's work moving forward. “We all need to belong to something bigger than ourselves.” - Dr. Charles E. Schaefer (2011), *History Speaks*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWSUkUsWeZI>

On behalf of APT's Board of Directors, Staff, and Members, we extend our deepest sympathies to the Schaefer family and to all who knew and loved Charlie.

Because of his lasting influence, we know the therapeutic powers of play, the therapeutic power of play therapy, and we are grateful to have known the therapeutic power of Charlie Schaefer.

*\*\*Condolences may be sent to his children Karine Schaefer and Eric Schaefer at 540 Scarsdale Road, Yonkers NY 10707.*

## **Association for Play Therapy**

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