

## WHITE PLAINS

# Family, friends mourn pioneering psychiatrist, Dr. Selwyn Brody

## Researcher into psychosomatic field is dead at age 91

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Dr. Selwyn Brody, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst from White Plains who was among the first researchers to study the link between illness and personality types, was



Selwyn Brody

was mourned by family and friends yesterday at a memorial service in White Plains. He died Saturday at his residence at the age of 91. Besides working in private practice in Westchester and New York City, Brody sought connections between the mind and the body in a field known as psychosomatic medicine. Over the course of a long career, he worked out mental health treatment plans for cancer patients, studied the ways that long-term emotional stress can cause physical illnesses and documented the emotional side effects that drugs such as steroids can have on patients.

"He got interested in what kind of symptoms different people get, the kind of personalities that are apt to get cancer. You can predict by personality type who is likely to

get cancer, barring environmental factors. He was one of the earliest ones to look at that," said Phyllis Meadow, the president of Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies in Manhattan, where Brody was a former faculty member and member of the board of trustees.

Brody was trained as a psychiatrist and then entered the field of psychoanalysis, and Meadow said he worked to foster understanding between the two fields. Psychoanalysis traces its origins to the theories of Sigmund Freud and the so-called "talking cure," and it has often clashed with the psychiatric community, a medical profession emphasizing the role of biology and pharmacology in mental illness.

Dr. Brody was born in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, on Feb. 23, 1912, to Chaim and Chibalaya Brody. His parents were murdered in an anti-Semitic hate crime committed by a local policeman, according to his family, an event that was referred to in a 1984 film starring Liv Ullman and Kiefer Sutherland called "The Bay Boy."

Dr. Brody graduated from McGill University in Montreal and earned his medical degree in 1936. His desire to practice neurology was thwarted by a quota system limiting Jewish doctors in the medical profession, according to his family, and he entered the relatively new field of psychiatry instead.

"He was very passionate, a rebel," said his daughter, Patricia

Brody of New York City. "He challenged tradition in every way. He had a peppery quality, but he was tender, too."

He married Jeanne Davis in New York City in 1948, and the couple moved in 1954 to White Plains, where Mrs. Brody survives. In White Plains, Dr. Brody was known as an avid tennis player on public courts around the city, a scrappy and tenacious player who fought for every point, as well as a figure skater who could execute near-perfect turns and jumps.

In Westchester, Brody served as a psychiatrist with Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Residential Treatment Center and Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry. Brody served as a president of the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis from 1973 to 1975. He stopped lecturing 10 years ago and closed his office at the age of 85, though he was still consulting with old patients via telephone at the time of his death.

In addition to his wife and daughter, he is also survived by another daughter, Dr. Jill Brody of Providence, R.I.; a son, Thomas Brody of Brighton, Mass.; and five grandchildren. Memorial arrangements were completed by the Ballard-Durand Funeral Home in White Plains, where yesterday's memorial service was held.

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