

## Ian Stevenson's Early Years in Charlottesville

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My first association with Ian Stevenson occurred when I was completing my second-year studies in medical school at the University of Virginia. Ian had moved to Charlottesville from New Orleans the year before and had taught "Introduction to Psychiatry" to the second-year students. I needed a job for the summer and thought it would be interesting to work in his research laboratory, where he and his Ph.D. assistant were investigating the biological/chemical causes of schizophrenia. So one spring day I waylaid Dr. Stevenson in front of the old Medical School on his return from Chancellor's Drug Store, where he had just had lunch. I introduced myself and told him that I wanted to work in his laboratory during the summer. I could see that he was taken aback by my confident assurance that he would hire me on the spot. In his careful, investigative style he asked me about my qualifications, and I told him that prior to medical school I had worked in a laboratory for Drs. Parson and Crispell, both of whom he knew. The result was that I spent that summer in Ian's laboratory looking at rats' brains which had been subjected to substances obtained from patients who were schizophrenic, as well as the brains of other rats who were the controls. The control rats had been subjected to substances obtained from members of the professional staff. (One can, of course, question the latter's suitability as "normal controls," but nevertheless . . .)

Several years later I worked with Ian as a resident in psychiatry. During our first year the residents rotated night and week-end duties, and when Ian was the Attending he met with the resident on duty early Sunday morning and discussed his/her work with one of the patients. Woe be to the resident who had not boned up on the history of that patient, including illnesses in his/her life and family, childhood traumas, and the state of his/her physical health, as well as the psychological reasons for his/her admission to the hospital. Ian was an internist first and a psychiatrist second. I valued those sessions with him and always came away more enlightened and challenged and determined to work even harder.

Our paths diverged when I went into child psychiatry and Ian went into full-time study of reincarnation. Later I was delighted when he married Margaret Pertzoff, whom I had known earlier but had not seen in years as our paths had diverged. They gave much happiness to each other over the years.

It was very sad watching Ian's lung condition progress until he was bed-ridden and shortly thereafter died. Throughout that time he was cheerful when I visited, asking about me and my family, and he always urged me to "come back soon."

Among the many qualities that I admired in Ian, and hope to emulate, was his pursuit of the truth to the end of his life.