

## **In Memoriam**

**MARIAN D. SIGMAN, Ph.D.**  
**Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry and Psychology**  
**University of California Los Angeles**  
**1941 – 2012**

Marian Sigman, Ph.D., a valued colleague and friend to many at the Semel Institute at UCLA died on April 30, 2012; she was 70 years old. Marian Sigman was a developmental and child clinical psychologist and Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences and of Psychology. She was an internationally acclaimed scholar, generous teacher and colleague, and a pioneer in the fields of autism and developmental risk. Dr. Sigman has left her mark on the field with a rich legacy of significant scientific contributions.

Marian obtained her Ph.D. in Psychology from Boston University and studied risk and protective factors in pre-term infants with Arthur Parmelee as a postdoctoral fellow in Pediatrics at UCLA. She became a member of the faculty in the Departments of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Science and Psychology at UCLA in 1977. She and her late husband David Sigman, Ph.D., also a faculty member at UCLA, enjoyed a rich set of friendships and professional relationships during their careers spent entirely at UCLA.

Dr. Sigman's research program was instrumental in understanding the early deviations of development in autism and longitudinal prediction to later outcomes. Late in her career, she launched a seminal study of infant siblings of children with autism to examine early risk factors and the developmental course of autism prior to the age at which it was commonly diagnosed.

Dr. Sigman published hundreds of research articles and scores of chapters. She edited two volumes about pre-term infants and co-authored the widely-praised book, *Children with Autism: A Developmental Perspective* (1997). Highlights among her research contributions were the discovery (with Marc Bornstein) that infants' attentional processes predict cognitive and language development (1989); that symbolic play (1981) and joint attention (1986) are impaired in children with autism; and that children with autism can achieve secure attachment relationships with primary caregivers (1984, 1994). Dr. Sigman's research also included important contributions on the impact of nutritional status on cognitive development and on parent-child communication patterns and child anxiety.

Throughout her career, Dr. Sigman provided outstanding and distinguished teaching and service to the University and the academic community. She supervised 12 postdoctoral fellows and 30 graduate students in clinical and developmental psychology. She was named outstanding research mentor in the UCLA Department

of Psychiatry in 2000. For 18 years, she served as training director for the NIMH-funded UCLA Interdisciplinary Research Training Program in Childhood Psychopathology. Her trainees are among today's leaders in autism research. She was the first President of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR), Chair of the Advisory Committee of the National Childcare Study, and founding President of the International Society for Infant Studies (ISIS). She served as Associate Editor of *Child Development*, the leading journal in the field of developmental psychology. With Daniel Geschwind, she was co-founder and co-director of the UCLA Center for Autism Research and Treatment. In May 2009, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR). She retired in 2010.

Dr. Sigman is survived by two children, Professors Hilary and Daniel Sigman, and by four grandchildren. An open memorial service for Marian, which was arranged by her daughter Hilary, was held on May 14 at Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Sigman Scholars Fund for students conducting research on autism and developmental disabilities (<http://www.semel.ucla.edu/autism>).

The UCLA Center for Autism Research and Treatment (CART) and the UCLA Psychology Department are planning a memorial service at UCLA to honor Marian's memory and celebrate her life. Details will be forthcoming.