



Lewis Paeff Lipsitt

September 30, 2021

Lewis Paeff Lipsitt, 92, of Providence, RI, loving husband and best friend of Edna Duchin Lipsitt, to whom he was married for 69 years, died peacefully, with his wife by his side, on September 30, 2021.

Lew was born in New Bedford, MA on June 28, 1929, to Joseph and Anna Paeff Lipsitt.

The family later moved to Marion, MA. He attended Tabor Academy, the University of Chicago (BA, '50), the University of Massachusetts (MA, '52), and the University of Iowa (Ph.D. '57). He received an Honoris Causa in 1966 from Brown University and another from the University of Athens in 2006. He served in the Air Force (1952-1954) working as a clinical psychologist in San Antonio, TX. In 1957, he began his teaching career at Brown University, where he worked until retirement in 1996. As emeritus professor of Psychology, Medical Sciences, and Human Development, he continued his work as a researcher, consultant, author, editor and lecturer until 2016.

A leading pioneer and intellectual force in the field of child development, he produced groundbreaking work in the study of infant behavior. He was a prolific author, writing seminal papers on infant sensation, perception and learning as well as on perinatal risk, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). In 1959, Lew was founding

director of the Brown University Child Study Center where he started a research program on infant behavior and development, and a graduate training program in experimental child psychology.

Later in his career he focused his attention on addressing “behavioral misadventures,” the conditions that kill and debilitate more young people than all diseases combined. Lew served on many committees and boards, such as the Board of Directors of RI Kids Count, Rhode Island’s premier child advocacy organization. He served as Executive Director for Science at the American Psychological Association and was president of the Eastern Psychological Association. Throughout his career, Lew received numerous achievement awards.

Lew was a brilliant and passionate science communicator who produced an extraordinary body of work. His joy, wonder, and curiosity about infants was contagious. He was a supportive colleague, mentor, and advisor and loved his career as researcher, professor, and advocate for children. He was a caring, compassionate, and creative person who encouraged other’s intellectual curiosity, especially his own children and students.

Working collaboratively was a hallmark of Lew’s abilities. He was the guy you wanted on a committee - he was patient, a great listener, and problem solver. He excelled in getting work done.

Lew and Edna shared an avid interest in education and childhood which was partly why their bond was so strong - a team in every sense of the word. They entertained countless local, national and international colleagues in their home and together, they traveled extensively around the US and the globe. Lew loved learning, lecturing and visiting others in his field, gaining knowledge that impacted his studies and sharing

his work with others.

Family was enormously important to Lew and his connection with his brothers, their families and Edna's family, could be seen at the many gatherings held in their homes in Providence and Marion, MA. Lew loved being with children, never afraid to join in kid's play and easily conversed with them about their interests. He was always ready to entertain with his magically disappearing English penny coin trick and he especially enjoyed showing off with a yo-yo and teaching others how to use one. It is hard to imagine Lew without a yo-yo in his pocket, eager to give it away.

Lew maintained his welcoming smile and his wonderful sense of humor, he loved telling and hearing a good joke and he enjoyed a good play on words, even as his memory faded. Lew collected an array of unique musical instruments, often playing them with his guests. Documenting through photography was important to Lew, capturing family events, professional conferences and his trips around the world. He was a voracious reader and his home was filled with books and professional magazines. He collected and read rare and specialized books on child development, child rearing and human development, gathering an historic perspective of his field.

Lew is survived by his wife, Edna Lipsitt, his son, Mark Lipsitt, and daughter, Ann Lipsitt, brothers, Paul Lipsitt (Brooke), Don Lipsitt, Cyrus Lipsitt (Carole), and Peter Lipsitt, many nieces and nephews. For 15 years, Lew enjoyed, appreciated and loved being part of the family of residents and staff at Lauremead, in Providence. He was predeceased by his sisters-in-law, Grace Falk, Lois Alex, Merna Lipsitt

and his brother-in-law William Falk.

A memorial to honor Lew will be held at 2:00 p.m. on October 27 at Laurelmead. Vaccination required.

Contributions may be made in his memory to Planned Parenthood or the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology at the University of Akron.

Tribute Wall



“ *Cuba visit*

Peter Haiman - March 08, 2022 at 07:09 PM



Lew continues to have meant a great deal to me! There are only a few days when I do not miss him with love.

Peter Ernest Haiman - August 16, 2022 at 09:28 PM