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# clinical psychology queens Bernie Zilbergeld, psychologist, writer on male sexuality

Posted by Sam Yorko - 2009/09/08 20:12

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<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/200...> Bernie Zilbergeld, psychologist, writer on male sexuality Kelly St. John, Chronicle Staff Writer Thursday, June 20, 2002 Bernie Zilbergeld of Oakland, a psychologist and author known widely for his pioneering writing about men and sex, has died. He died on June 12 at his home of complications from diabetes. He was 62. Dr. Zilbergeld was best known as the author of *Male Sexuality* (1978) and its update, *The New Male Sexuality* (1999), which sold more than 1 million copies. In these books, which some critics called landmark texts, he used a humorous and practical approach to address issues from sexual obsession to premature ejaculation. He was the first person to write something for men about sexual problems, said longtime friend and colleague Lonnie Barbach. In the late 1970s, there was just no information. People wandered around with sexual problems, just feeling inadequate. He wrote about (male sexuality) in an affirming and permission-giving way. Dr. Zilbergeld, who ran a private therapy practice in Oakland, is also known in the Bay Area for his work in the 1970s as one of the original directors of training at UCSF's Human Sexuality Program. In that capacity, he taught doctors, psychologists, social workers and therapists about how to treat male sexual problems. Dr. Zilbergeld, a stubborn and often unpopular man who once noted he had been described as both the Joe McCarthy and the Ralph Nader of the sex-therapy world, didn't shy away from conflict. In the 1970s, he gained prominence as one of the first researchers to publicly challenge the research of sex therapists William Masters and Virginia Johnson, arguing that their claims of success in treatment were inflated. He also wrote *The Shrinking of America* (1983), a book that took a look at psychotherapy and made the case it is often overprescribed. He was motivated by a kind of intellectual combativeness, said longtime friend and colleague Jackie Hackel. He was always swimming against the tide, and that kind of cranky intelligence . . . meant that he didn't take things for granted. He probably made as many enemies as he did friends. Born in New Jersey on June 28, 1939, Dr. Zilbergeld graduated from Ohio State University. He received his doctorate in clinical psychology from UC Berkeley in 1973. Described by friends as a witty and informative speaker, Dr. Zilbergeld lectured throughout the country. He was often interviewed by the media, serving up opinions about everything from trends in dating to President Bill Clinton's involvement with Monica Lewinsky. A man of diverse interests, he reviewed new hardware and software for *Computer Currents* magazine from 1985 to 1992. also a frequent contributor to *The Chronicle's* book review section, writing on matters of sexuality, relationships and psychology. He wrote a book about sexuality and aging, tentatively titled *The Lovers*, which is scheduled for release next year. Dr. Zilbergeld is survived by a daughter, Claire Zilbergeld of San Francisco; his partner, Marilyn Greene of Walnut Creek; a friend whom he considered his son, Ian Cox Alameda; a brother, George Zilbergeld of Freehold, N.J.; and a sister, Hannah Gordon of Queens, N.Y. A memorial service is planned for Sunday, Sept. 8, at 2 p.m. at UC Berkeley's Men's Faculty Club. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Diabetes Association, PO Box 2680, North Canton, OH 44720.

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