

Hempel

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facilities. This effort was successful, and represented a significant improvement in the way individuals were treated under such circumstances. The accomplishment was recognized by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, who presented Dr. Hempel and his colleagues with the Mary Holdworth Butt Award in 2000 in recognition of their efforts to protect the rights of the mentally ill in these situations.

An insatiable reader, Dr. Hempel was versed in virtually everything written about extreme violence, and mass and serial homicide in particular. Other interests included ancient coins, the symbolic motifs of Persian rugs, myths of ancient cultures and the history of boxing. He was a staunch promoter of Jack Johnson, famed heavyweight boxing champion in the early 20th century. Although he had a scholarly interest in human aggression, Dr. Hempel was a compassionate psychiatrist, much more interested in treatment and safety than in punishment, and especially interested in understanding the motives and mental states of those prone to extreme violence.

Despite his career being cut tragically short by intractable illnesses, Dr. Hempel maintained an avid curiosity, which he channeled into a very productive program of research. Drawing on his diverse interests, he authored or coauthored 23 articles on a wide variety of subjects, almost all within a ten year period. In addition to important articles on combined suicide and homicide and on adult and adolescent mass murder, the creativity in his thinking is seen in work on topics such as glossolalia, and the relationship between dreams and violence. He also presented numerous papers at scientific conferences on similarly wide-ranging themes. Dr. Hempel was known for reaching out to other colleagues in the field and bringing them together. In 2001 he was the Program Chairman for the Psychiatry and Behavioral Science Division of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. The authors of this memorial, for example, came to know each other personally by virtue of Dr. Hempel's

active solicitation of others into research projects he had conceived. As his illness progressed, he was forced to leave his practice in Vernon and return to Galveston, where he lived out his remaining years. He nevertheless continued to read and write voraciously and to organize workshops, which he was unable to attend.

His acumen and expertise was recognized in other arenas, as well. In 1999, Dr. Hempel was featured in the *New York Times* in a three-part series on mass murder. He also appeared in a

"...he led a group that in 1999 and 2000, pushed tirelessly for passage of legislation to regulate practices related to the transportation of mentally ill inmates between courts, county jails and state mental health facilities."

television special, *"The Criminal Mind,"* produced by the BBC and aired on the Discovery Channel. In poignant recognition of his stature, he was apparently sought by the *New York Times* to comment on the Virginia Tech shootings, which of course postdated his death.

It was not surprising that many laudatory comments were made at Dr. Hempel's memorial service. There were several themes that emerged as some, of the many who attended, shared their recollections. Tony was often characterized as a caring physician, who adopted a rarely seen non-judgmental approach to his subject and to the patients he treated. He is also remembered as a thoughtful and careful researcher who was most creative in the ideas he chose to explore. Perhaps his most enduring legacy, however, was his ability to stimulate others to participate in such activities. His role as a

teacher, both clinically and in research contexts, will have a lasting impact, as his influence lives on through others.

These thoughts were summarized in the flier that was distributed at his memorial service:

"Dr. Hempel mentored numerous young clinicians, including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and paraprofessionals. He made an indelible mark on those he taught and he taught many a person formally and even more people informally. Moreover, he was an expert at fostering others' interests in research while giving them the power of belief – belief in themselves, their intellectual skills, and their worth as thinkers. Dr. Hempel will long continue to touch countless lives through the skills he helped to develop in many fine clinicians and researchers as well as the consumers of mental health services."®

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