In Memory of Neville Symington

When Neville first arrived in Sydney it became immediately clear that he was bringing with him a different perspective on both our functioning as an Institute and Society, and on our training.

He began overhauling the training program and raising our profile as a profession, and he expected all of us to join him, leading by example. As a result we became very active and visible on the Sydney and Australian scene and the very many series of seminars and public presentations were usually chaired by him or backed by his presence in some way.

These presentations were inevitably well attended and Neville was always a very good and popular teacher. One by-product of this was that Neville raised considerable money for SIP and continued to do so until he died. He was particularly interested in psychosis and amongst many other things convened a group devoted to understanding the psychotic part of the personality. He really gave it all his heart and sole.

Never one for detail or rules, Neville railed at the constraints that Institutes put on good clinical practice, teaching and creative learning and contributed to a freeing up of our practices from some of these “”unnecessary “regulations. (though never enough for him!)

Neville fought tooth and nail for changes to be made, and he certainly raised the temperature in our Branch and APAS meetings. He “brooked no opposition”

and this created a certain tension around him.

Over the years Neville travelled across Australia and New Zealand and many countries internationally, often going where psychoanalysis was not well established contributing to sharing his ideas internationally, and more often than not, was invited back. All this time he was writing his books, often debating his current thoughts before committing them to paper.

As the years went on you could see Neville trying to hone in on the essence of what it is that gives the ability to really make meaningful contact in such a way that it brings about a creative and free change. This became more important to

him than any theory or model and he was always inviting us to discard such thinking and open up a clear pathway of connection between patient and analyst.

Overall I feel we were very fortunate to have Neville choose to come to Australia and fittingly, towards the end of his life, he was justifiably recognised for his lifelong contributions to our profession globally.

 Margaret Berkovic