



GAY FISHER BARFIELD (Class OF 1954)



Dr. Leah (Swenson) Barfield, holds a BA as a graduate of University of California at Berkeley, Masters level teaching credential from San Francisco State University, advanced studies at the Sorbonne in France, and a Ph.D. from Union Graduate School, and is a Hawaii Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She was a Resident Consultant and Member of the Center for Studies of the Person (CSP) based in La Jolla, California, as well as on its Board of Directors, for nearly 30 years. At CSP she was instrumental in founding one of the first Women's Centers in San Diego, and many other group programs and trainings over the years. She founded and directed the Center's internationally recognized 10 day residential summer program which was held for 22 years, the "Living Now Institute." Based on the person-centered approach of Dr. Carl Rogers, this annual seminar explored social,



personal and political transformations from Carl Rogers' person-centered perspectives with renowned guest speakers and participants from around the world every summer at the University of California San Diego campus. The final program was held in Hilo, Hawaii in 1998, with emphasis on principles of Aloha and Peace.

In 1984, she and her long-time colleague, Dr. Carl R. Rogers, became the founding Co-Directors at CSP of the Carl Rogers Institute for Peace, a project to apply person-centered principles to real and potential crisis situations, in the search for the evolution and transformation of conflict. This program (and/or through individual members of its staff), convened and facilitated training and peace-building gatherings in Central America, Northern Ireland, South Africa and the former Soviet Union. Leading international and national political leaders, policy-makers, diplomats and lay-persons of impact world-wide were in attendance at the two Central American conferences held in Rust, Austria in 1985 and in Heredia, Costa Rica in 1988. Supported by a sizeable donation from Joan Kroc after Dr. Rogers' death in 1987, and with the cooperation of the United Nations University for Peace, and then sitting Costa Rica President Oscar Arias and former President Rodrigo Carazo, among others, Dr. Swenson-Barfield and the Carl Rogers Institute for Peace staff were able to convene the second Central American peace meeting in Costa Rica in 1988, again with leading political persons involved in the turmoil of Central America.

After the death of Dr. Rogers in 1987 and his posthumous nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize for this work, she remained the Institute's Director, with a focus on improving ethnic, race, gender and family relations in our homes, neighborhoods, offices, and countries. Dr. Barfield offered through the Institute for Peace a series of workshops, lectures and conferences focused on urban diversity dialogues with grassroots leaders, held neighborhood "Living Room Dialogues", and provided consultations for private sector groups, government and educational institutions, agencies and business organizations in the USA and throughout Europe.

Dr. Barfield has been a frequent invited guest lecturer and consultant for colleges, universities and conventions worldwide in the field of counselor training, family relations, men and women's issues, life transitions, peace-building, gender issues, and inter-cultural relations, with a special interest in facilitating improved communications across differences in contexts of tension and volatility. She also provides private counseling and consultations to individuals, couples and organizations to transform such tensions and conflicts into constructive, equitable and fruitful dialogue, actions and change.

Dr. Barfield has been widely interviewed on radio, television and in the print media, and has published numerous articles and chapters in professional journals and texts, including a chapter in the second edition of Freedom to Learn for the 1980s by Carl Rogers, along with many chapters included in several texts & journals in recent years. Honored with election to the "Charter 100" of San Diego County, a group to recognize outstanding women of impact, she is also listed in "Who's Who of American Women." In 1992 she received the Humanitarian Award from the County of San Diego for "improving human relations" by convening business, government, grassroots, religious and educational leaders in an "Urban Diversity Council," and for bringing together and training neighbors, immigrants and community leaders to listen to one another more openly in a series of "Living Room Dialogues" regarding the then inflammatory US/Mexican border issues; out of which emerged a "Dialogue With Diversity" consulting team.

A Hawaii Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT License #51), she strongly believes in "merging values and beliefs about individual human worth with positive social action, and service for the larger good," by building healthier families and communities, and by developing the mutual respect "that will increase our sense of well-being and effectiveness as individuals, family members, neighbors, working teams or members of our chosen social, political and spiritual systems." She continued to travel throughout USA and Europe to train therapists until 2005, and currently speaks at conferences and universities as invited.

In Hilo, Hawaii, where she has lived since 1995, prior to the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, she continued to offer women's support groups, do on-going "inter-vision" sessions with young therapists, and met with individuals and couples in private counseling, currently doing so minimally through the new on line technologies. She has convened numerous workshops on Rogers' approach to human relations and communications, and as an adjunct professor provided trainings and courses in Rogers' approach for many years at University of Hawaii at Hilo for Masters level students in mental health counseling, until her retirement from UHH in 2010. She still visits classes there by invitation to speak about the PCA.

She is grateful to be able to mentor and "mentress" upcoming generations of young therapists and peace makers. Currently she is writing, speaking and video documenting materials about her experiences and perspectives of the person-centered philosophy and activities over the past 50 plus years, regarding her work with Carl Rogers and PCA colleagues, and other kindred spirits around the world. Together with her husband, Glen Barfield, a retired orchid grower and breeder of renown, she has lived and worked in Hawaii since 1995. Barfield may be reached for private individual or family counseling, speaking engagements or consultations at 808/968-6139 or 937-9461 in Hilo, Hawaii (e-mail: gbarfield@hawaii.rr.com), or by writing her at Box 737, in Mt. View, Hawaii 96771.

These biographies are based on research and could contain discrepancies.
If there are any excerpts you feel should be changed please feel free to contact lvhsaa.1@gmail.com

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