

In Memory of Dr. Gilbert Kliman

Gilbert Kliman, MD died of activated CLL (chronic lymphocytic leukemia) on August 30, at the age of 96, in Tucson, AZ. He was a loving and most beloved husband, father, grandfather; a trailblazing psychoanalyst, trauma therapist, and forensic psychiatrist; and a passionate pilot. A lifetime social justice warrior, since his civil rights activism in the 1940s, he brought that social justice commitment to everything he did.

A graduate of Harvard Medical School and the NY Psychoanalytic Institute, his innovative work included developing a therapeutic preschool model, Reflective Network Therapy, for children with severe trauma, developmental disorders, and autism. That work, which goes back to the 1960s, has been replicated in North and South America. He was the first psychoanalyst to demonstrate that very young children grieve the loss of family members. He used his deep understanding of the life-long effects of severe childhood trauma to serve as a highly regarded and successful forensic psychiatric expert in legal cases against religious, social service, and mental health organizations that failed in their duty to protect children from predation. Working with the human rights group Raíces, he successfully advocated for parents and children separated at the Southern US border. He authored and coauthored dozens of therapeutic workbooks for children who had survived personal and community-wide disasters that have been used in the Americas and the Middle East, as well as over 90 books and reviewed articles.

He was a treasured teacher and mentor to mental health professionals and early childhood educators. He founded the Center for Preventive Psychiatry in White Plains, NY, where he established psychoanalytic services, clinical training, and research for the treatment of disturbed and traumatized preschoolers. He later founded the Children's Psychological Health Center in San Francisco. During the pandemic, he worked online from Tucson, first as Board Chair for the Harlem Family Institute and then moved to Harlem Family Services, where he offered forensic seminars and to which he donated his forensic practice. He has won dozens of awards for his scientific and humanitarian contributions to the field. He was devoted to psychoanalytic research and valued very highly his most recent award, the 2025 International Psychoanalytical Association Outstanding Scientific Achievement Award.

Dr. Kliman grew up in Brooklyn, NY and Cincinnati, OH, and spent his adult years in White Plains, NY, San Francisco, CA, and finally in Tucson, AZ. He was married to Dr. Harriet Wolfe, a fellow psychoanalyst (of San Francisco and Tucson), for the last 36 years and with her, raised their daughter, Rebecca Kliman, currently of Tucson. From his previous marriages, he was father to Jodie Kliman and her husband David Trimble, of Brookline, MA; the late Steven Kliman of Vermont; David Kliman and his husband, Lars Yockel, of Tucson; and stepfather to Amy Ford, of Kennebunk, ME. He was the grandfather of Ransom Trimble, of Billerica, MA; Jessica Trimble, of Nantucket, MA; and the late Jacob Kliman-Trimble, of Brookline, MA.

He was an enthusiastic explorer of all things related to the Earth and its atmosphere, as reflected in his passion for both aviation and archeology. He was a skilled private pilot who flew thousands of hours in single and twin-engine aircraft, flying as far as Argentina with his son, David, to help open a Reflective Network Therapy service. He and his late son, Steven, also flew together and discovered ancient Mayan ruins in Isla Holbox, in the Yucatán, Mexico.

He will be forever cherished and deeply missed by all his family, as well as the psychoanalysts, child professionals, and patients whose lives he touched.

Donations in his memory may be sent to Raíces (<https://raicestexas.org/>), a legal services program for immigrants, or the Harlem Family Services Reflective Network Therapy Program (<https://reflectivenetworktherapy.org/about-reflective-network-therapy/>).