



# Semaphore

The official Newsletter of the Georgia Sociological  
Association

January 2020

# From the President

Dear GSA Members and Community,

Happy New Year! It is an honor to serve this year as the President of the GSA as one of the few presidents of immigrant origins. When I have immigrated from Romania almost 20 years ago, little did I know that Georgia, and now, GSA will become my new home.

Georgia's population is undergoing dramatic transformations and the rise of its immigrant population is perhaps one of the most spectacular developments of the past decades. Therefore, it seemed very fitting to propose "Georgia's Changing Demographics" as the theme for this year's meeting. The 2020 Census will soon provide valuable data to update our knowledge on Georgia's growing population. I would like to encourage all of us to conduct and present research on Georgia's major social problems and transformations from topics related to population, healthcare, gender issues, racial disparities, crime and justice, religion and politics, social inequality, labor and organizational issues, urban versus rural disparities, to forces of globalization. Please mentor your students to conduct research on Georgia's most pressing issues, so we can train the future generation of sociologists and researchers that will make a difference in Georgia.

We did not have an annual meeting in the Atlanta area in more than a decade. To be consistent with our theme, it seemed natural to invite all the sociologists around the state to meet in the county with one of the most dramatic population growth and highest immigrant populations in the country, Gwinnett County. The 2020 GSA Annual Meeting will be hosted at the beautiful Lake Lanier Lodge within close distance from the very diverse immigrant communities of Buford, GA. While starting the planning of our 2020 meeting, I would like to personally thank to Carly Redding and Sara Mason for our fantastic conference at Jekyll Island Club Hotel in November 2019. Jekyll Island is a treasured location for our GSA membership; we love returning to this welcoming historical landmark. Many thanks to all the members of the Executive Board and the student assistants and volunteers who made this conference a success.

We are excited to seeing everyone at Lake Lanier Lodge in November! Please spread the word and bring your colleagues and students to our gathering. I hope that you all will join us!

Sincerely,

Darina Lepadatu

President

# A note from the Past President...

I was truly sorry to miss our annual conference this past year. Unfortunately, health issues made it necessary for me to stay close to home. However, I have heard many great stories about the workshops, presentations and awards ceremony. Thank you all for coming to Jekyll and sharing your vision of community with one another.

It was only a few years ago when I attended my first GSA meeting. From the beginning, I was welcomed and encouraged to participate. I knew this was an exceptional organization and over the past few years while serving on the Executive Board, I have been reminded of that continually. I was honored to serve as President of the GSA, as well as to serve on the Board over the past four years and I thank you for the opportunity. I want to thank the 2018-2019 Executive Board for their work and friendship over the past year. The conference was a success because of everyone involved.

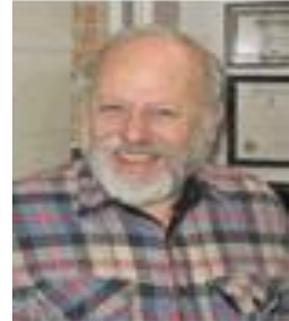
I hope that this year is off to a fantastic beginning for everyone. I look forward to seeing everyone at Lake Lanier in November!

Carly Redding

University of North Georgia

# 2019 GSA Sociologist of the Year Award

## Mel Fein: In Memoriam



Dr. Mel Fein, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Kennesaw State University and former GSA President, died of pancreatic cancer on August 26, 2019. He was the author of 24 books, founding Editor of *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology*, and columnist for the *Marietta Daily Journal* and *Cherokee Tribune*.

### **The Beginning: How I Met my Husband, Mel Fein**

It was a chilly day in February 2005. I first met Mel at the Cracker Barrel restaurant in Kennesaw during my pre-job interview breakfast. He swept in like a force of nature-full of energy and verve. I was impressed by his charisma and honesty. He also seemed genuinely interested in me as a person.

So, given that warm welcome, I thought my teaching job talk would go quite well. It did not. I thought my presentation on gender, caring work, and the occupation of nursing would certainly resonate with the faculty and senior seminar students. It did not.

Much to my surprise, Mel was extremely disruptive during my presentation. He sat in the back, scowling, shaking his head, occasionally muttering “No, no, no,” as I struggled to hold everyone’s attention. He appeared to be in some sort of physical pain.

“Dr. Fein, what’s wrong?” I asked. “Do you have a question?”

He wanted to know what theory I was using to frame my work. Easy enough...or so I thought. “My research is based on feminist and conflict theory, specifically the devaluation of caring in a patriarchal society,” I confidently replied.

To my dismay, he looked even more distressed. He declared, “My Dear, not only am I not a feminist, I am an antifeminist!”

I was aghast. Things only went downhill from there as the class erupted in laughter. Following his example, they were now seemingly freed from classroom decorum and respect for the guest speaker.

But later, over a pint of draft beer, Mel told me, “You really can teach.” I held onto that compliment.

A few weeks after that, Dr. Sam Abaidoo called to offer me the Assistant Professor of Sociology job. I was eager to accept, but my friends urged restraint. They'd heard my stories about the anti-feminist professor at Kennesaw. "Are you sure you can work with this guy?," they asked.

I thought I could handle Mel. Besides that, other offers had not yet materialized. So I took the plunge and came to Kennesaw State. Needless to say, I'm glad I did.

Mel proved to be a wonderful colleague. I loved his laser focus. He could cut through the pretense of university politics. Likewise, he had a non-nonsense view of social issues and wrote weekly op-ed columns for two local papers. But he could also look deep into a person. He could tell you things about yourself that maybe you didn't know. Insight was one of his many gifts.

We got engaged that year and married the next. That's not to say it wasn't challenging. We didn't always see eye to eye. But when it came to the basics, we were compatible.

#### **The End: Mel's Last Year**

Let me tell you about his last year. Mel was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in June 2018. He had no real symptoms until it had already spread to his small intestine.

Chemotherapy helped for a while. His quality of life was relatively good. He was able to write, travel, and importantly, eat real food. He was doing so well that in May 2019 we took a two-week Mediterranean cruise from Venice to Barcelona.

But by late July, his cancer came back with a vengeance. Although the prognosis was terminal, Mel was never one to feel sorry for himself. He used his remaining time to say goodbye to family and friends. He kept on writing, even from his hospital bed.

His wish was to die at home. With God's help, with support of loved ones, and the care of Vitas Hospice, we made this happen. He died four days after his 78<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Melvyn Leonard Fein lived and died on his own terms. Even at the end, he was teaching us about love, honesty, and courage. I am honored to have been his partner and wife.

Linda Ann Treiber

Professor of Sociology, Kennesaw State University

# List of Mel Fein's Books

Social Domain Theory: Towards a Standard Sociological Taxonomy (2019)

Too Lazy to Chew: A Memoir of Discovery (2019)

The Great False Hope: A Critical Account of the Obama Presidency (2019)

Saving Our Marriages, Saving Ourselves: Surviving the Voluntary Intimacy Crisis (2019)

Social Individualism: A Bold Blueprint for Our Future (2019)

Social Stupidity: The Inevitability of Folly (2019)

Forward-Looking Conservatism: A Renegade Sociologist Speaks Out (2018)

A Principled Society: Cultivating Trust in a World of Strangers (2018)

Unlocking Your Inner Courage: Five Winning Strategies to Achieve the Life You Want and the World We Need (2016)

Evolution versus Revolution: The Paradoxes of Social Change (2015)

Redefining Higher Education: How Self-Direction Can Save Colleges (2014)

Post-Liberalism: The Death of a Dream (2012)

Human Hierarchies: A General Theory (2012)

On Loss and Losing: Beyond the Medical Model of Personal Distress (2011)

A Professionalized Society: Our Real Future (2010)

The Professionalized Self-Learning to Succeed in a Middle-Class World (2010)

Peoplization: An Introduction to Social Life (2007)

The Great Middle-Class Revolution: Our Long March Toward a Professionalized Society (2006)

Race and Morality: How Good Intentions Undermine Social Justice and Perpetuate Inequality (2001)

The Limits of Idealism: When Good Intentions Go Bad (1999)

Hardball without an Umpire: The Sociology of Morality (1997)

Analyzing Psychotherapy: A Social Role Interpretation (1992)

Integrated Anger Management (IAM): A Common Sense Guide to Coping with Anger (1993)

Role Change: A Resocialization Perspective (1990)

# New Executive Board

President: Darina Lepadatu

President Elect: Pamela Pitman Brown

Vice President: Anne Borden

Treasurer: Christy Flatt

Past President: Carly Redding

Members at Large:

Christina Wolfe

Ravi Ghadge

Allen Hyde

Parliamentarian: Sara Mason

Journal Editors: Linda Treiber and Brandon Attell

Semaphore/Website: Diogo Pinheiro

# GSA Best Paper Award Winners

## Graduate Student Paper Awards

1st

Lea Marzo, Georgia State University

“Set Trippin’: An Intersectional Examination of Gang Members”

2nd

Charen Glasgow, Kennesaw State University

“Resisting a Sexist Ideology: Responses to Sexual Harassment by Women Security Officers in Trinidad and Tobago”

## Undergraduate Student Paper Awards

1st

Carrie Leon, University of North Georgia

“Latino Access to Healthcare in Response to Recent US Immigration Policies”

2nd

Deidre Clark Ferguson, University of North Georgia

“In the Beginning”

# 2019 Meritorious Service Award:

## Alison Hatch

Alison Hatch had served the Georgia Sociological Association in many professional service roles, culminating with her role as President of the organization in 2016-2017. During her presidency, Ali had moved the organization forward by working on improving the website, the electronic registration and the listserv with the GSA membership. Alison has taught as an Associate Professor of Sociology for Georgia Southern University and currently teaches at the University of Colorado Boulder. Alison's primary research and teaching interests include gender violence, marriage & family, and the sociology of sexuality. Although Ali had moved to Colorado, she continues to be a dedicated member of the GSA family.



## Scenes from the Annual Meeting







