

This article was downloaded by: [World Association for Person-Centered ]

On: 06 December 2011, At: 01:58

Publisher: Routledge

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## Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and  
subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rpcp20>

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Charles J. O'Leary

Available online: 11 Aug 2011

To cite this article: Charles J. O'Leary (2004): John Keith Wood, 1934-2004, *Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies*, 3:3, 221-222

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14779757.2004.9688350>

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# Obituary

## John Keith Wood, 1934–2004

Charles O'Leary

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John Keith Wood, Ph.D., died in the presence of his wife Lucila Machado Assumpção and his son Stanton Wood on August 22, 2004 near his home in the interior of Sao Paulo, Brazil. He was seventy and had been suffering for many months from the effects of Hepatitis C, the result of a long-ago transfusion. For the last twenty years he lived on Estancia Jatoba, a property that includes a government designated ecological reserve and a working farm and educational center. He had become a farmer, teacher and writer about ecology, sustainable agriculture and the conditions that encourage community cooperation. John saw his work in ecological and community preservation as a natural extension of his immersion in the Person-Centered Approach. Like JRR Tolkien's elves he was interested in learning the languages of all living things.

In his teens (yes), twenties, and early thirties John had been an aerospace engineer. While, organizing a group for scientists who had lost their jobs and were supporting each other in search for new careers, he found a profound explanation of the group members' creative development in Carl Rogers' descriptions of conditions for change. Joining Rogers as a graduate student in 1971, he soon became a collaborator with Carl, co-writing a chapter, 'Client-centered therapy', for a textbook and working with him in a series of projects widening the approach to include the possibilities inherent in large group gatherings. Along with Natalie Rogers, Maureen O'Hara and others, John and Carl convened large group experiences throughout North and South America, Europe and islands in the Pacific. The concepts of the group as its own facilitator, and of a 'group mind' were deepened, refined and became

major preoccupations in his writing and speaking for the rest of his life. He felt strongly that such groups were not another form of therapy but were essential laboratories for understanding the nature and power of social cooperation.

John was a prolific writer of thoughtful theoretical articles, professional papers, essays and short stories, thirty-five publications in all, including four books. (For John's bibliography, go to: <http://members.1012surfnet.at/pfs/wood.htm>). Among his interests were the connection between the person-centered approach and the healing arts of humans throughout the centuries; the relationship of client-centered therapy and the Person-Centered Approach; the meaning of the core conditions; group dialogue, and lately the connection between ecological responsibility and the Person-Centered Approach.

He had qualities of intelligence, humor, compassion, congruence, breadth of reading and depth of perspective that made him stand out in any group of which he was a part. (He might also want it known that he was a very good basketball player long past the usual age for playing that sport.) In his ability to listen with absolute presence to a person's unique sufferings and gifts he was a force of nature unforgettable to those who experienced it. The words of Roy Croft's poem seem particularly apt.

'I love you not only for who you are  
But for who I am when I am with you...'

His wife Lucila Machado Assumpção can be reached at <[lumiajoy@dglnet.com.br](mailto:lumiajoy@dglnet.com.br)>.

His son Stan Wood can be reached at <[sevanwood@warpmail.net](mailto:sevanwood@warpmail.net)>.

Charles J. O'Leary