Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison On the Death of Professor Emeritus Joseph Kepecs

Joseph Goodman Kepecs, M.D. was born October 8, 1912 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended the University of Chicago, where he received his B.S. (1935) and M.D. (1937). He completed his psychiatric internship at Elgin State Hospital in 1937, followed by an 18 month internship at Cook County Hospital in Chicago (1938-1939). He completed his psychiatric residency at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Washington DC in 1941. He went on to serve as an Army Psychiatrist from 1941 to 1946, and subsequently received psychoanalytic training from the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis, graduating in 1949.

Dr. Joe Kepecs became a Professor of Psychiatry at University of Wisconsin School of Medicine & Public Health in 1965 and received emeritus status in 1984. He served as attending physician in the Department of Psychiatry at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago from 1950-1965. Additionally, he was a professorial lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry at University of Chicago (1960-1965) and for the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis (1957-1960). He became a faculty member at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis in 1974.

Throughout his career, Dr. Joseph Kepecs produced numerous publications, focused on psychoanalysis and psychiatry. During his time at UW, he served as a Psychoanalytic Training Analyst for the Chicago Institute of Psychoanalysis. He was President of Chicago Psychoanalytic Society (1964-1965), and President of Wisconsin Psychoanalytic Study Group (1979-1980). Additionally, he was a member of the American Psychoanalytic Association, American Psychosomatic Society, and the American Psychiatric Association. He was a beloved member of the UW Psychiatry Department and especially appreciated for his attention to supervision of residents and trainees.

Joseph Kepecs passed away on November 18, 2016 at the age of 104. Friends and colleagues have described him as an exceptionally warm and friendly person. He will be remembered for his sharp mind and wry sense of humor. Richard Levine, a longtime friend and colleague, reflects on his passing: “He was an ancient Redwood whose fall to earth diminishes all of us… An exemplar of our better angels. Joe is irreplaceable. A reminder of what Aeschylus wrote, "Let us dedicate ourselves to making more gentle life in this world."