

A Tribute to Judith Bluestone

By Paula Smith



February 18, 2009 was a sad day for people all over the World. That was the day Judith Bluestone took her last breath on this Earth.

Judith Bluestone was born in Chicago in the month of December. The year was 1944. Judith was born with structural damage and neurodevelopmental challenges as a result of prenatal chemical toxicity. During her pregnancy, Judith's mother smoked, drank huge amounts of coffee, and ate fish from a highly polluted body of water. Judith's father was a research chemist. He was involved with developing five of the "dirty dozen" insecticides and pesticides which are now banned in 127 countries. He also was working with chemical precursors to Agent Orange. Judith's father was known to use experimental chemicals around their home.

Judith was born with cranial abnormalities. Her face was lopsided. At age 3 Judith received the measles vaccination. Her old sister had contracted measles and their doctor came by the house to vaccinate Judith as he was aware of her fragile immune system. Judith suffered a horrible reaction to this inoculation. Judith believed that because she wasn't diagnosed with autism she escaped the only treatment for autism at that time, Institutionalization. At age 8 Judith was deaf, due to the small bones in her inner ear that had fused shut. Her upper palate and Jaw stopped growing which made her nose appear to be sunk into her face along with her "caved in" mouth. She also suffered from seizures.

Judith overcame the many obstacles in her path. She worked for 37 years with learning-disabled students and studying neurological impairments. Through her work as an advocate, teacher, therapist and lecturer she designed a holistic approach that has had great success. In 1994, she founded The Handle Institute, a non-profit organization that helps people with neuro Developmental disorders. Handle stands for Holistic Approach to Neuro Development and Learning Efficiency. Judith gave lectures all over the world on the Handle approach.

The year 2004 was a very sad year for me as it was the year my 2 year old son was diagnosed with severe autism. After the MMR vaccine and a barrage of vaccinations were given to my son, I noticed a frightening change in my child. I wondered where all his words had gone along with other issues. During the Summer of 2006 my mother gave me the May 15th, 2006, Time Magazine. An article inside included a bit of information on Judith Bluestone and the work she was doing at The Handle Institute. The article also mention Judith's book "The Fabric of Autism". Intrigued, I put the magazine down and headed to the local book giant to find this book. I was surprised that my store didn't have it but they ordered it for me. When that book came I devoured it with my eyes. Before I finished reading it, I knew that if I had to go from Florida where I live to Seattle, Washington to meet Judith, then that's what I had to do.

I was surprised and delighted when Judith Bluestone herself returned my call! Before I knew it, I was sobbing into the phone, "Please Judith could you see my son!" It just happened that Judith had recently purchased a house in Atlanta. She arranged to meet us there. Judith became a great friend to my son and a counselor, teacher, and friend to me. We went on to visit Judith numerous times in her Atlanta home. There were always many people visiting and learning. I've met doctors, dentists, teachers, and parents and they were all there to learn and be guided by Judith. Judith used her autism and other difficulties to help neuro-typical people to understand what it's like to be autistic.

Judith received awards such as the Jefferson's award in Seattle as well as the national Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis award.

Judith Bluestone left us but left us in good hands with The Handle Institute and the good people at Handle will continue to carry on with her amazing work.

To find out more about the Handle Institute by going to www.handle.org.

In 1994 Judith Bluestone founded The Handle Institute in Seattle, WA.