

The Institute and the NFFR say Goodbye to a Legend

Professor Frances Cooke Macgregor, the first scholar to document the major social and psychological stresses of facially disfigured people, and a former member of the faculty of the Institute of Reconstructive Plastic Surgery, died on December 24, 2001 at the age of 95.

After completing her academic studies with graduate work in anthropology and sociology, Macgregor joined the Institute of Reconstructive Plastic Surgery. Together with a team of other specialists from NYU Medical Center, Bellevue Hospital and Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, Macgregor was invited in 1949 to participate in a project, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, to study the stresses suffered by persons who had been facially disfigured through birth, accident, disease or war. According to a *New York Times* article written on July 23, 1950, "the specialists are trying to find how parents and teachers can help in lessening and preventing psychological effects." Macgregor and the team of specialists conducted extensive research into the personal lives of many patients by interviewing them not only in a clinical setting but also in visits to their homes.

It was this extensive study that established Macgregor as an international authority on the psychosocial problems associated with facial deformities. She is known for her 1953 book Facial Deformities and Plastic Surgery: A Psychosocial Study, and her 1978 follow-up book, After Plastic Surgery: Adaptation and Adjustment. As a result of her professional observations, Macgregor constantly warned doctors to meet not only the medical needs of their patients, but their psychological needs as well. Each medical procedure affected a person's view of himself and the world around him.

Over the years, Frances Cooke Macgregor interviewed hundreds of patients and their families. Three of her books on this subject became known to the medical profession as "Macgregor's trilogy." Her research and the three books fueled development of many self-help groups for patients and their families. With unflagging diligence, she convinced the World Health Organization to include facial disfigurement on its list of published disabilities. For her accomplishments in this area, she received accolades in 1995 from Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada and President William Clinton of the United States.

When she was honored with a Special Citation for Distinguished Service from the Society for the Facially Disfigured (now the NFFR), Frances Cooke Macgregor said, "Now is not the moment for complacency or self-congratulation. There is still a great deal to be done. There are thousands and thousands of men, women and children in this world like those you see today who, only because of the way they look, are among the least accepted in our society and the most neglected." Her words are still true today and continue to inspire our Psychosocial Team as it works with families who are wrestling with the difficulties of craniofacial differences.

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