

May 30, 1988

McAlpin Award Panel
National Mental Health Association
1021 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2971

Dear Panelists:

I am pleased to nominate Professor Alfred M. Freedman for the 1988 McAlpin Mental Health Research Achievement Award. Few psychiatrists have done as much for the education and training of psychiatric professionals, have encouraged such useful and important academic research, and have provided leadership for the nation's major scientific societies as has Dr. Freedman. His formal academic curriculum vitae is attached, but I would like to highlight a few aspects of his record which encourage me to make this nomination.

Formally, Dr. Freedman was certified in psychiatry and psychoanalysis after his graduation from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 1942. He assumed the chairmanship of the Department of Psychiatry at the New York Medical College in 1960, and created an outstanding research and teaching center. His major contributions in academic research are in the treatment of opiate dependence with narcotic antagonists and long-acting opioids; and in his studies of the effects of psychoactive substances on brain functions.

I joined him as a member of the faculty of the New York Medical College in 1966. At the time, opioid addiction had surfaced as a national problem. Few psychiatrists were willing to undertake the treatment of those afflicted with drug addiction, yet he established the first municipal hospital treatment unit for drug dependence. He supported two separate research programs in addiction, one based on sociological models (under Richard Brotman) and another, based on biological models of narcotic antagonism. His program developed the merits of naloxone, cyclazocine, and naltrexone as treatments for opiate dependence; and broadened the applications of methadone and levo-acetylmethadyl as narcotic substitutes. He encouraged the collaborative study of chronic hashish users in Athens; and began studies of the central effects of cocaine, when cocaine use was a rare and occasional dependence.

In addition to developing a Department and teaching programs for medical students and residents, and encouraging the research studies, he found time to edit the definitive Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry, which is now used world-wide. He also founded and edits the journal Integrative Psychiatry.

BIOGRAPHY: ALFRED M. FREEDMAN, M.D.

In his residency training programs, he recognized the special needs of women physicians, and he developed the first post-graduate training program for women psychiatrists. He established a Day-Hospital program for the severely mentally ill; and has always maintained relationships with many community hospitals for the education of their personnel. (I believe that the present program is affiliated with 14 community hospitals).

The diversity of his interests is to be seen in his support of the studies of pharmaco-electroencephalography, a discipline which is not well known in this country, but well established in Europe and Japan. And in his willingness in 1968 to support studies of convulsive therapy -- at a time when the treatment was outside the main stream of psychiatric practice and research. That encouragement led his student, Richard Abrams and myself, to become international leaders and authors in ECT.

His reputation in research led to his election as President of the American College of Psychopharmacology (1972), President of the American Psychopathological Association (1971). In 1973, he was elected President of the American Psychiatric Association.

Dr. Freedman has an enviable record of participation and interest in international psychiatry. He invited leaders from foreign countries to visit the Department and lecture, in the Goldman lecture series that began in the early 1960s. He has been an active member of international psychiatric associations and is well known as lecturer, teacher, and friend throughout the psychiatric world, not only in Western countries, but in many developing countries as well.

Al has received many awards and much recognition for his leadership, humanity, and support of academic principles in research and teaching. He is a warm, friendly, and encouraging man, with friends throughout the world. His wife, Marcia is a Professor at Columbia University, and both their sons have enviable academic records.

Considering the long list of outstanding recipients of the McAlpin Award, I am proud to recommend your consideration to add his name to this list. I have discussed this nomination with him, and he has agreed to be considered for the award, and to attend the symposium in Los Angeles in September. His current address and telephone numbers are listed in his c.v.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry