

Introduction to the Florence Tyson Memorial Keynote Lecture: A Tribute to the Life and Legacy of Florence Tyson

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Music may offer the only bridge from inner world to outer reality. It may provide the only means to give expression, in a safe way, to inner feelings. . . . It is important that the music therapist's sphere of interest be the inner life of the patient—that the main concern be with the use of music as a vehicle by which this inner reality can be brought to the surface, to be heard, experienced, and examined in the presence of another.

—Florence Tyson



Florence Tyson was an accomplished musician and printmaker, an extremely sensitive therapist, an advocate for justice and equal rights, and a person with a powerful intellect. All of these characteristics contributed to the success and high regard the Creative Arts Therapy Center (CARC) in New York City attained. Her passion was to provide creative arts therapies in the community for the well-being of people with mental disorders. She pursued her life's work passionately, making it possible for CARC to provide services for nearly 40 years. By being so dedicated to her beliefs of the therapeutic value in the arts, in people, and in social justice, she became the pivotal and most important music therapist during the development of music therapy in New York City (Aigen, 2001). Her work and "the Center," her center, was known far beyond the city and acquired an international reputation (C. Bandini, personal communication, June 21, 2001; McGuire, 2004, p. 353)

References

- Aigen. (2001, March). Eulogy presented at the memorial service for Florence Tyson, New York, NY.
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The Florence Tyson Fund for Creative Arts Therapies was established in 2004, to continue the work of Florence Tyson, a world-renowned music therapist and a pioneer in the field of community-based creative arts therapy. The Musician's Symposium, sponsored by The Louis Armstrong Center for Music & Medicine at Beth Israel Medical Center, was made possible through the support of the Florence Tyson Fund.