

Tribute to Dr. Alice Kahn Ladas

Erica Goodstone, Ph.D., LMHC, LMFT, LMT, CRS

Abstract

Dr. Alice Ladas is one of the unsung heroes of women's liberation. She was a pioneer in sexology as well as body psychotherapy and an advocate for scientific research throughout her career; she currently serves as Research Committee Chair on the USABP Board of Directors, one of the few USABP members who worked directly with Wilhelm Reich and owned her own Orgone Accumulator. Dr. Ladas was one of a small privileged group to view the first presentation by Alfred C. Kinsey, renowned author of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, and she helped to found the original Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis.

Keywords

Alice Kahn Ladas – Memoirs – Body Psychotherapy History

I met Dr. Alice Kahn Ladas sometime in the early 1990s, years before the USABP came into existence. Sexuality played an important role in Alice's work from the very beginning. When we first met, I was chairperson of the New York Metropolitan Area Section for AASECT (The American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists). In that capacity, I contacted local AASECT members in an attempt to build a supportive, collegial network with local New York City sexologists.

Most of the AASECT members I contacted agreed that creating an ongoing networking group was a great idea and said they would be happy to attend such a meeting when they knew "enough people" would be there. Dr. Ladas was one of the few people who was not only interested in such a meeting, but also helped and encouraged me to get it organized and running.

She invited me to her lovely Upper West Side Manhattan apartment where she treated me to a delightfully healthy lunch. As a result of this initial meeting, we exchanged a few body psychotherapy sessions: I offered her my Rubinfeld Synergy sessions and she gave me some Bioenergetic Analysis sessions. In doing so, we helped each other gain more insight and relief from our current life dilemmas.

Our first meeting led to the creation of a group of local sexologists that continued to meet for several years. As a group, we accomplished what none of us could have done alone. At one meeting, we discovered that four of us had submitted papers to be presented at the next AASECT meeting – and **all four papers had been rejected**. Our small group of four people created our own mini-conference presentation at the next AASECT conference. We had forty people in attendance, and all four of us were put on the official program at the AASECT conference the following year. That small group also created an AASECT sponsored conference (offering CEU's) at F.I.T./State University of New York, where I was working at the time.

Years later, when I became a USABP Board Member, Science and Research Committee Chairperson, I again reached out to Dr. Ladas for assistance. When we met for lunch, our discussions led to a framework of questions and goals that started the ball rolling. She became a committee member, and when I left the board, Alice eagerly became a board member and took over as Science and Research Committee Chairperson.

Dr. Alice Ladas is one of the unsung heroes of women's liberation. She has always been dedicated to spreading the word about what she believes to be true, a pioneer in both sexology and body psychotherapy. She met, studied, and trained with some of the leading professionals in both fields. She struggled to fight biases against her work in Sexology, prejudice against people's ideas that women should not be independent or successful, and resistance to her involvement with Body Psychotherapy and Bioenergetic Analysis.

Her initial training was Neo-Freudian at the Washington Square School of Psychiatry.. She got her MSW from The Smith School of Social Work, which she claims was quite orthodox Freudian.

After receiving her MSW, she worked at The Jewish Board of Guardians and The Payne Whitney Clinic, as well as in the private office of Nathan Ackerman, M.D., at the time that he was developing Family Therapy. She also was one of a select few to be invited to the first presentation by Alfred C. Kinsey (the renowned researcher and co-author of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*) at the New York Academy of Medicine in New York City.

Dissatisfied with the results of traditional talk therapy, both for herself and for her clients, Dr. Ladas was attracted to the work of Wilhelm Reich because of its attention to the body and positive regard for human sexuality. At an early SSSS conference, she was among the first group of people to watch, behind locked doors, the earliest movies about the work of William Masters and Virginia Johnson.

In the 1980s, Charles Kelley, founder of the Radix Institute, and Alice studied together with Hartman and Fithian, co-sex therapists, who probably had trained with Masters and Johnson. Somewhere along the way, she also took Betty Dodson's workshop designed to assist women to better understand their own bodies through self-pleasuring.

Dr. Alice Ladas is currently a Diplomate for the American Board of Sexology, a Diplomate in Clinical Social Work, and a clinical member of the USABP. In the past few years, she has presented her work, information about body psychotherapy, sexuality, and the importance of scientific research at conferences such as The International Bioenergetic Analysis Society, The American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists, The New York Society for Ethical Culture, and The USABP. Since her ground-breaking, best selling book, *The G Spot*, in the 1980s, she has continued to write numerous articles, including some recent ones for Cliniscope, The American Academy of Clinical Sexologists, and The Archives of Medical Research. She is currently a USABP Board Member, Science and Research Committee Chairperson, and she maintains a private practice in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and New York City.

Biography

Dr. Erica Goodstone has served the USABP as an original steering committee member, as Science and Research Chair on the Board of Directors, and as Newsletter Editor. She continues to assist as a member of the Research Committee. She is a Certified Rubenfeld Synergist®, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Licensed Massage and Bodywork Therapist, Diplomate & Fellow, American Association of Integrative Medicine, Diplomate, American Academy of Pain Management, Diplomate, American Board of Sexology, and a Certified Sex Therapist, American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists. She maintains a private counseling practice specializing in relationships, sexuality and body psychotherapy. She can be reached through her web site at www.DrEricaWellness.com.