At the end of the journey Lyle Lewis Lloyd (August 10 1934–February 12 2020)

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Lyle was a pioneer of the field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). He was one of the initiators of ISAAC and the journal *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* in the 1980s. His own engagement in non-speech communication emerged in the 1970s. Lyle published articles, several together with Macalyn Fristoe, and organized courses about what later became known as AAC before ISAAC and the AAC journal were established. He remained strong within this field until the end of his career, and his work is frequently cited. He has guided, and supported several generations of researchers and practitioners working in the field of AAC.

Lyle received his B.S. in 1956 at Eastern Illinois University, majoring in speech-language pathology and physical education; his M.A. in 1959 at University of Illinois, Urbana, majoring in hearing and speech disorders; and his PhD in 1965 at University of Iowa, with a dissertation concerning assessment of hearing in children with intellectual disabilities. After a few years as a speech pathologist in public schools, he held shorter engagements in various universities before becoming Scientific Review Administrator at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda from 1969 to 1977. In 1977, he became Professor at Purdue University where he served in different positions until his death, the last years as Professor Emeritus.

From his first publication about hearing in school children, Lyle pursued a range of issues related to severe disabilities. He never focused on simple tasks or their solutions but engaged himself in complex issues related to children with several impairments, such as the combined effect of hearing loss and intellectual disability, where the developmental consequences – with a slogan from gestalt psychology – are greater than the sums of the parts. These complex issues required complex thinking, which suited Lyle’s academic temperament and enormous work capacity. Very early in his career, Lyle began the journey into making communication and language possible for individuals who are minimally verbal or have no speech. From the 1970s, Lyle studied the communication needs of children with intellectual disabilities. In 1979, he applied for and received a grant to investigate how manual signing can facilitate speech development, followed by further grants on this topic from 1981 to 1989. He also received grants for research on graphic symbols from 1985 to 1987, and he launched a large study of iconicity in manual and graphic communication, from 1990 to 1995, a topic that is still discussed today.


When the AAC journal was launched in 1985, Lyle’s voice was present in the first issue, in an article together with Jane Doherty and Joanna Kelsch Daniloff about the transparency of Amer-Ind. Lyle was editor of *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* from 1986 to 1993. In this role – which was and still is so important for the evolution of the field of AAC – he helped and guided new authors, many of whom were not native speakers of English, through the publication process. He was more concerned with the ideas than the presentation: A text could always be improved if the ideas were good enough. Lyle actively built relationships with authors and followed their careers, always willing to offer advice, challenge ideas, or simply sit and chat. He welcomed bold ideas, was merciless in his scrutiny of the merits of those ideas, but always respectful of the commitment of the person proposing those ideas. Passing the Lyle test was a great confidence boost to a young researcher. His curiosity persisted unabated, his irritation at what he perceived as lazy reasoning or poor science, never diminished.

Lyle was interested in most issues in AAC, large and small. He took an active part in the many discussions and was a popular discussant in scientific conferences. He had a special
interest in communication models, assessment methods, terminol-
ogy issues and the role of iconicity, issues that are still alive and frequently discussed. Lyle’s support of Blissymbolics
deserves a special mention. Blissymbolics was the first graphic symbol system for children with little or no speech and severe reading difficulties, and the availability of a com-
plex communication system was decisive for the growth of the AAC field. Before Shirley McNaughton introduced Blissymbols in her class in 1971, parents cut out pictures from magazines to put on home-made communication boards. Lyle immediately recognized the unique contribution to be made to AAC by Blissymbolics and emphasized the need for research that differentiated Blissymbolics from the more pictographic symbol systems. He encouraged his doctoral students to learn Blissymbols and initiated several research projects on the transparency and translucency of the graphic communication systems that were in use in the eighties. His long-lasting interest in Blissymbolics was evident in 2012, when he supported the inclusion of a Blissymbolics strand in the ISAAC Conference Research Symposium. In many of his publications throughout the decades, Lyle referenced Blissymbolics and the contribution this graphic language made to the AAC field. The attention he gave to Blissymbolics was typical of Lyle’s strong support of the variety of perspectives within the field of AAC and his desire to see clinical programs accompanied by research studies. Lyle was engaged and often disagreed with the ideas, inferences and analyses of others but he was a good friend to disagree with. He always had a point and usually he gave in if he real-
ized he had been presented with a stronger argument. During the biennial membership meetings, he proposed many amendments to ISAAC’s Bylaws and made strong efforts to keep “his” AAC journal on the right track. His sometimes challenging and insistent interruptions often led to better decisions and ISAAC owes him a great debt.

Since 1977, Purdue university was Lyle’s academic home. He would sit hidden behind a pile of books with a set of pencils, erasers and sharpeners always at hand for writing or correcting a paper, chapter or letter – simultaneously trying to verbally connect with and be attentive to everyone, whether near or far, to teach, instruct, bind and secure the true course of AAC or getting his mug of coffee at the right moment. Of all his legacy of research, teaching and pioneering, his greatest contribution may still have been his commitment to encouraging young researchers, offering guidance far beyond the reaches of his program at Purdue.

His role as tutor and mentor in the field of AAC was extraordinary. He has been a mentor and friend for many who later became leaders within the field of AAC internationally, but equally important they became AAC entre-
preneurs in their own countries. Among those for whom he served as their PhD advisor were Helen Arvidson, Soo-Jung Chae, Jane Doherty, Donald R. Fuller, Carol Anne Goossens’, Orit Hetzroni, Mick Isaacson, Ravi Nigam, Rajinder Koul, Ralf W. Schlosser, Gloria Soto, Oliver Wendt and Carole Zangari.

Through Lyle’s work, Purdue University became an interna-
tional Mecca for AAC. He welcomed researchers from USA and abroad for longer or shorter stays, to study or visit, share and discuss his and their own ideas, thoughts, knowledge, interests and involvement in AAC. Among them were Erna Alant, Carmen Basil, Karen Bloomberg, Mats Granlund, Filip Loncke, Gregor Renner, Martine Smith and Hans van Balkom. He organized many incisive and persuasive exchanges of thoughts and discussions through think tanks and research seminars at Purdue on topics like graphic symbols, terminol-
ysis issues and literacy, always emphasizing the necessity of theoretical and explanatory models in AAC for the field to evolve. These were events that sharpened the minds of the participants and lay foundations for new research.

Lyle traveled widely and gave lectures at universities in many countries and was tireless in his efforts to promote AAC within developing countries. He was a major force in supporting the establishment of the Center for Augmentative and Alternative Communication at the University of Pretoria in 1990. From 1990 to 2008, he was actively involved in supporting the Center in developing five different degree courses focused on AAC and early childhood intervention. He was Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria from 2003 to 2005. For his engagement for AAC in South Africa, he received an honorary doctorate (honoris causa) from the University of Pretoria in 2006.

In 1990, ISAAC decided to organize a research symposium after the main conference. The idea was to allow for single-topic seminars with more interaction and in-depth discus-
sions than is possible in ordinary conference sessions. This approach was a perfect fit with Lyle’s views on the importance of academic discourse. He took an active part in the organization of the research symposia and functioned as chair and editor of several proceedings.

Lyle’s enormous contributions to ISAAC and the field of AAC were acknowledged on several occasions. He received the President’s Awards for 1986–1988 in October 1988, and again for 1996–1998 in August 1999, and he was elected Fellow of AAC in 2004.

Lyle’s often booming voice has silenced but his ideas will continue to be heard. Just three weeks before his death, together with Donald R. Fuller he submitted the manuscript of an edited textbook on AAC, which is planned for publica-
tion at the end of this year. References to his work will con-
tinue but Lyle, a warm and generous person, a good friend and an inspiring colleague will be remembered and missed.

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