



**CENTRE  
DE RECHERCHE  
DE L'USMM**

CENTRE AFFILIÉ À  
L'UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL

**Announcement**

**September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

## **Recent Passing of Kieron O'Connor**

It is with great sadness that we have learned of the passing of our esteemed friend and colleague, Kieron O'Connor. Kieron passed away on August 27th at 3:45 in the morning. With his passing, the research community has lost an exceptionally valuable individual with a great passion for scientific research. He was one of the founders of the *Centre de recherche de l'Institut universitaire en santé mentale de Montréal* (CR-IUSMM) and an exemplary clinical researcher with a great commitment towards his colleagues, friends, students and patients. In the course of 30 years, Kieron has shaped numerous careers in both clinical practice and research. He was a source of inspiration for anyone fortunate enough to spend time with him. His presence and sense of humour always brought people closer together.

### **An Accomplished Science Career**

Kieron first acquired a Bachelor of Social Sciences at North London Polytechnic (1972), and then went on to a Master's in Experimental Psychology from Sussex University (1979), followed by doctoral research in Psychophysiology at the University of London (1984). This subsequently led to a Diploma in Clinical Psychology from the British Psychological Society (1986). During his years in London, he worked closely with the eminent psychologist Hans Eysenck. In 1987, he crossed the Atlantic and accepted a position as a clinical researcher with the *Centre de recherche de l'Hôpital Louis-H. Lafontaine*, the University of Montréal, while also maintaining affiliations with many other universities. Originally, Kieron O'Connor was trained as a neuroscientist with a focus on cognitive psychophysiology, but later he developed a strong interest in clinical psychology. The majority of his research was dedicated to the study and treatment of obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders, tic disorders, and Tourette's syndrome. Throughout his career, Kieron aimed to improve treatment outcomes for patients, which led to him to develop new therapeutic approaches that are now being applied internationally, including inference-based therapy for obsessive-compulsive and related disorders and a cognitive psychophysiological treatment approach to the treatment of tic disorders.



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The originality and promise of Kieron's research is recognized and underscored by the many grants he received over the years, consisting of over 12 million dollars in funding by organizations at the provincial, federal and international level. In the course of career, Kieron authored or co-authored nearly 550 oral presentations and publications. Among those, close to 500 were peer-reviewed papers. In addition, he has contributed to over 60 research reports and book chapters. He wrote twenty books in the fields of psychology and clinical psychiatry that both appeal to researchers, as well as mental health professionals and key stakeholders in the field.

With the aim to improve the prevention of psychological disorders, while simultaneously fostering a better community understanding and social inclusion for often stigmatized populations, Kieron looked deeply into the causes of mental health disorders and their impact on quality of life and the daily functioning of sufferers. To counteract stigmatization, Kieron published a collection of five books and multiple videos to foster awareness aimed at the general public to improve awareness and understanding. He was highly involved in community organizations for people suffering from obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders, Kieron presented conferences, intervention activities and led training sessions. He was a founding member of the Quebec Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation.

### **A Man of Many Talents**

Kieron was a man of many talents with passions that went beyond science. Beyond his prolific science authorship, he also wrote and published novels under the pseudonym of Ken Konor (*The Twitch*; *The Super Way*). His artistic passions led him to outlets such as the piano, theatre, method acting and mime. As a lover of nature, he was drawn to hiking, sailing, cycling and cross-country skiing. Kieron never denies his Irish roots either, and never missed an opportunity to organize an original Saint Patrick's day at the office with darts, Celtic music and Guinness at the ready!

Kieron had a keen and natural awareness of the spirit behind our research center, including its culture, its foundation, and the people that breathe life to its projects. Kieron's many contributions were always filled with joy, humanity, social conscience and a boundless passion for research, but also a deep appreciation and respect for colleagues who devote themselves to such endeavours. Each Christmas, Kieron's colleagues, students, research assistants and staff received a gift in the form of a bottle of wine, chocolate or some other thoughtfully chosen item in recognition of their personal contribution. As a firm believer in annual team dinners, he would always take the time to deliver a heart-warming speech to underline and individually thank each person who attended.



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Kieron continued to work and write papers until the very end. His work and legacy will continue and carried forward by the many colleagues who have been inspired by him. Kieron was a humble, big-hearted man with a generous spirit that has touched us all. To pay your respects, family, friends and colleagues are invited to the [Mont-Royal Funeral Complex](#) (at 1297, chemin de la Forêt, Outremont), on Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. A reception commences at 10 a.m. followed by a celebration of life ceremony from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, please express your sympathies by a donation *in memoriam* to the [Foundation de l'Institut universitaire en santé mentale de Montréal - Kieron O'Connor Fund](#). In accordance with Kieron's wishes, these donations will contribute to financing research in clinical psychology.