

# Thank you to Prof Harold Richman

Outgoing Acting Chairperson: International Board of Advisors

Prof Richman has been involved with the Children's Institute since well before its establishment in 2001. He was one of four original advisors, asked by the Institute's first donor, Atlantic Philanthropies, to help shape a blueprint for the Institute. Before that, he was instrumental in helping broker the initial funding for the Institute from Atlantic Philanthropies. So he was instrumental in taking the Institute from an idea, to a concept, to a fledgling six-person organisation, to the dynamic organisation it is today.

His expertise and guidance extended around the globe, explains Marian Jacobs, founding director of the Children's Institute: "He could aptly be regarded as the Fairy Godfather of children's studies in the world, for his influence has extended from institutions as far afield as Jordan in the West and Chapin Hall, Chicago, in the East; and from Trinity in Ireland, to UCT at the tip of Africa. And in each case, he has guided, advised, supported and nurtured with the same compassion, always with the mission that academia plays the best role it can in advancing the best interests of children."

Former deputy director, Maylene Shung King, recalls those early days: "Working with the Board of Advisors was my first experience with an international board. Harold, as deputy (and really *de facto*) chair, always led by example. His selfless commitment to the Institute is extraordinary and rare. He gave endless hours of his time, his family time, his organisation's time and his organisation's resources in his quest to help the Institute grow and develop. No stone was left unturned if he recognised a need and knew that he could do something to help. Through some of our most challenging times, he remained professional, objective and constructive in all his dealings with board members, university structures, management and staff alike."

These sentiments are echoed by Marian Jacobs: "As leader of the International Advisory Board, he has been a significant force in the Children's Institute. He has nurtured us as leaders, inspired the next generation of children's policy researchers and advocates,



supported us through our highs and our lows, and has been the most incredible role model."

Current director, Shirley Pendlebury, recalls her first encounter with Harold: "I first met Harold at the Advisory Board meeting in March 2007, a month prior to my taking office. Harold's conviviality, quiet wisdom, concentrated presence and deep knowledge of the Institute's work infused every moment of the three-day meeting. Since then, and over the distance between Chicago and Cape Town, I have also come to experience Harold's astonishing staying power and enduring care for the Institute. When I needed to talk through ideas or concerns, he was always available – by phone or on e-mail. Distance made no

difference to his constant care for and attention to the good of the Children's Institute. As a new director, I am indebted to Harold for his support and guidance, for his gracious, measured and inspired leadership."

Prof Richman's leadership extended much further than his official duties as a member of the board, says Maylene: "Since leaving the Institute in pursuit of my doctorate, he had become my referee, keen follower of my progress, and my friend. Every once in a while, if you are lucky, you meet someone who changes how you view life and humanity. They deflect you from your stereotypes and show you paths that you otherwise would have missed, had you not met them. Harold is such a person to me; he is one of the most extraordinary people I know. It is an honour and a privilege to have him as an advisor, colleague and friend."

Harold Richman, in the words of Marian, "is a legend and the Children's Institute is richer for the privilege of continuing to benefit from his leadership". As you step out of your duties as chairperson of the International Board of Advisors, we thank you for your unselfish and dedicated service to the Institute, and to children's studies more broadly. While we may not call on you for formal board duties any longer, we will always regard you as a special friend of the Children's Institute.

