

Tribute and Homage to those who left us

In recent months, during a year when organisations that provide services for survivors of torture faced new challenges during the global COVID-19 pandemic, some of the people who have been leading the anti-torture movement for years have passed. We would like to remember and pay tribute here to some of these figures. This list is by no means exhaustive. Through the names it contains, it is intended to serve as a tribute to the many workers, survivors, and friends who have left us.

Remembrance is the only paradise from which we cannot be expelled.

Javier Enriquez Sam (1960-2021). Surgeon and Master in Social Medicine were one of the founders of the Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad A.C. (CCTI) and its General Coordinator for several years. He was also the driving force behind the implementation of the Istanbul Protocol in Mexico since 2002, together with experts in documenting cases of torture in this country. As part of the CCTI team, he coordinated the area of Therapy and Rehabilitation. Javier was the leading expert in carrying out multiple reports. He co-authored training materials and research

that were the expression of 16 years of experience. He received the Tata Vasco Award from the Ibero-American University in 2018. Promoted training on the Istanbul Protocol in the most prestigious universities in Mexico. A tireless and untiring social fighter against the practice of torture, he died by COVID when providing care to his parents, being consistent with the solidarity that characterised him as a person and as a doctor throughout his life in the face of a health system dismantled by voracious capitalism.

Gerald “Jerry” Gray (1935-2020), a psychotherapist and licensed clinical social worker, founded and played a leading role in a number of lasting organisations devoted to the treatment of torture survivors and other organisations devoted to accountability for torture, trauma, and abuse of power. In the 1980’s, his private practice clinical experience with torture survivors motivated him to found Survivors International, one of the first torture treatment centers in the U.S. In 2001, Jerry directed the Center for Survivors of Torture in San Jose, affiliated with Asian Americans for Community Involvement. He



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played a key role in establishing other treatment centers in the U.S. and Canada. In 1998, he founded the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA), an organisation in the United States that works to hold



torturers accountable. He served on the initial steering committee and inaugural Board of Directors of the Canadian Centre for International Justice, founded in 2000. Other engagements included co-founding the Institute for the Study of Psycho-political Trauma, work with the Stanford Human Rights in Trauma Mental Health Laboratory, and consultation with the International Criminal Court and the International Institute for Criminal Investigation (The Hague). Thereafter, he founded and directed the Institute for Redress & Recovery at Santa Clara University. In his last years, Jerry co-founded and funded projects in El Paso, supporting legal and advocacy workers to recognise and manage vicarious trauma, connecting mental health evaluators with immigration attorneys to prepare reports supporting asylum seekers in immigration court. Furthermore, he provided video-therapy to Mexican journalists living in danger due to their coverage of corruption and violence, and funding observers documenting proceedings in immigration court.

Sister Jean Abbott (1943-2021) After taking a vow of poverty with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in 1961, Sister Jean lived her vocation to support the most vulnerable in our society. It was her work in Central America in the 1980's and later involvement with the Sanctuary Movement that brought her focus

to working with survivors of state-sanctioned torture. A clinical social worker by trade, Sister Jean was painfully aware of the legal, physical, and emotional needs of these refugees, and worked tirelessly to secure funding and pro bono services to help meet them. This advocacy culminated in the founding of the Center for Survivors. Sister Jean served as Clinical Director of the Center for many years, providing direct service to those in need and training younger clinicians in working with vulnerable



refugee populations. While Sister Jean ultimately stepped back from day-to-day operations, she never really stepped back from the work, travelling to Uganda for six months in her seventies to teach students there stress reduction and coping techniques and travelling several times to Mississippi in her later years to work with victims of human trafficking.

Jose María "Chato" Galante (1948-2020) was a leading member of the Association of Former Political Prisoners La Comuna, Presos del franquismo, which fought against the crimes perpetrated during Franco's dictatorship.

He was a member of the Revolutionary Communist League during his youth. At the age of 20 he was arrested, tortured and imprisoned for participating in student protests.



A militant on the underground, he was actively in the Ecologist and Human Rights movements until his death, at 71. He led the movement to fight against impunity for torture in Spain and to reverse the amnesty laws approved during the so-called Spanish “democratic transition” that allowed crimes to be unpunished. Gifted with a gentle disposition, he was one of those leaders who naturally managed to gather people around him, drawn by his charisma and his tireless work. In a sort of poetic justice, a few days after his death, Antonio Gonzalez Pacheco, alias Billy the Kid, his torturer that was never judged, passed away also from COVID.

Gianfranco De Maio (1963-2020). Graduated from the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Rome, he was a medical doctor specialising in neurology and tropical medicine. He has always been involved in social volunteering and joined MSF in 2001, initially as a field doctor, carrying out various missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Haiti, Brazil, Niger, Central African Republic, Bulgaria and Italy. He was project leader for the MSF Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Survivors in Rome, Athens, Mexico City and other places along the migration routes. Gianfranco was a free, bold, courageous and ironic man. His life and work have been a lesson in intelligence, passion,



professional and ethical commitment and an enormous enrichment for anyone who has met him, even for a short time. Gianfranco contributed with his analytical capacity, his critical spirit, his expertise, to consolidate and enrich the international movement of Doctors Without Borders.

Sister Dianna Ortiz (1958-2021). Founder and former Director, survivor-led Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC) International. She inspired so many by her courage and fortitude, and her quest to reveal the truth.

An excerpt from a March 29, 2021 email statement from The Hopi Foundation and the Barbara Chester Award Community honoring Sister Dianna: *“As a torture survivor, she modeled compassion, humility, and service which instilled hope in other survivors. Sister Dianna was abducted and tortured while teaching Mayan chil-*



dren in Guatemala. After her return to the U.S., she . . . worked with the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission in Washington, DC. In 1997 she co-founded Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC) in Washington, DC with the mission to give voice to torture survivors and gently support their healing. Every year on June 26th TASSC gathers survivors from around the world to commemorate the signing of the UN Treaty Against Torture. This event created opportunities for survivors to advocate directly with members of Congress, to educate the public during an organised vigil, and to share with each other, to heal together and make strong connections. She took the horrible experience of torture and created opportunities for collaborative healing with other torture survivors.”