

In Memoriam

# Stuart A. Mayper

1916–1997

By

Robert P. Pula

In *General Semantics Bulletin* No. 64 I wrote a one-page remembrance of Stuart Mayper, long a leader in rigorous, scientific, but very accessible writing in general semantics. Stuart had highly developed literary skills which, along with his musical sensitivity (e.g., playing Gershwin on the piano and singing Gilbert and Sullivan [oy!]), love of poetry, of life in general, enabled him to directly and humanely address his readers and audiences. That note in *Bulletin* 64 was necessarily brief. Stuart died before he could complete that *Bulletin*, so I filled in, wrote the page just before we went to print and, with Production Editor Marjorie Zelner, got it out. Here I would like to do a fuller job, as befits honoring the life of a major figure in general semantics of the post-Korzybskian period.

Stuart Mayper was born in Manhattan in 1916 into a family of what are called 'non-observant Jews', yet very much in the Jewish tradition of scholarship, sharp evaluating—and the, perhaps, most delicious (rhymes with gently vicious) sense of humor in the world. (Check the Yiddish lexicon for the frequency of humorously imaginative put-down words. Stuart knew this vocabulary and tradition quite well.) His scholarly-creative environment must have influenced him to become a playwright, for, at the age of seven, he wrote a play, a delightful pamphlet of which we have (with young Stuart's illustrations), which is amusingly 'sexy',

but concludes with the affirmation that the most important thing in life is *love*. (Reading that, I was reminded of the great poet Adam Mickiewicz's epic poem, *Pan Tadeusz* [Sir Thaddeus], a sort of novel in verse. It features a moving scene in which an old Jew plays a *polonaise-fantasia* at the wedding of the two young lovers, Tadeusz and Zosia [diminutive of Sophia], which leads to the central, concluding message of the poem: "*Kochajmy się*—let us love one another." [That epic poem has now been made into a magnificent film by the great director Andrzej Wajda, with a frankly, unapologetically beautiful score by the sometime 'avant garde' composer, Wojciech Kilar.]

But Stuart was not 'destined' to be primarily a playwright or any of the other modes of evaluating for which he showed a marked proclivity. His youthful development can be seen as a clear trajectory, with few distracting vectors, toward a life in science, but not just laboratory science (though he got an 'A' at Ohio State for chemistry research), but the kind of science that constantly asks, "What are we up to?", "How do we know what we claim to know?"; in other words, the epistemology of science. And "Is what we are doing 'right', from the societal point of view?" This thrust in his 'thinking' (evaluating/formulating) is what, I suspect, made him so responsive to Korzybski's general semantics when he first encountered it.

Study at New York's most prestigious high

school, where he set records for academic excellence—the McBurney School, to which you had to be admitted, a genuine college-prep academy somewhat in the tradition of the English ‘public schools’ (which are private)—prepared Stuart for his mastery of chemistry, and the research sensibility that allowed him to do so well at C.C.N.Y. (B.S) and Ohio State (M.S. and Ph.D. in chemistry). Eventually, that mastery and sensibility worked to serious effect in the Manhattan Project, which engendered the atomic bomb. Like Einstein, who was widely perceived as a ‘pacifist’, but who initially proposed production of the bomb to President Franklin Roosevelt, Stuart asked himself many agonizing questions about this issue; but, given the enormity of the German Nazi/Japanese Shogun-Banzai coalition, and the likelihood of their developing such weapons, they (Stuart and Einstein) and their colleagues evaluated that there was no alternative to getting there first. And a good thing, too.

Dr. Mayper became interested in general semantics in 1946. In 1962 he attended Dr. Russell Meyers’ Institute seminar on neurological backgrounds and scientific methods in relation to general semantics. In that same year he published his first article in general semantics, “Non-Aristotelian Foundations: Solid or Fluid?” in *ETC.: A Review of General Semantics*. (See the bibliography below.) He followed this up with study with Sir Karl Popper in London, a figure whose notions about disconfirming our hypotheses Stuart introduced into our seminars in 1977.

Now Stuart Mayper was not all scholarship, research, and teaching. Like most people who get something done in life, he was a man of strong passions. He took his loves quite seriously. And he had them. But, once married to Lois Rossignol, he accepted his role as father and husband, paid a lot of attention to his son and daughter, and toiled because of his passion for his work, and for them. When he joined the chemistry department at the University of

Bridgeport in Connecticut in the late fifties, he was in solid, eventually serving as chairman of that department for many years until his ‘retirement’ in 1986.

In the course of the churning of the clock of life—*change thinging*, as I say, resisted, perhaps, for a time, but finally accepted—Stuart went through a divorce, and then marriage to Judge Irene Ross (Mayper) in 1982. Having attended his funeral, and knowing his children, and his ‘stepchildren’ for a time, and his new grandchild, I can attest that his role as loving father continued on during those years, a fine example of what students of general semantics might call *invariance under transformation*.

Stuart joined the staff of the Institute’s summer seminar-workshops in 1977, where he took on the task of explaining the philosophical-scientific developments that eventuated in Korzybski’s general semantics: from Aristotle /Ptolemy, through Kopernik (Copernicus), Galileo, Brahe, Kepler to Newton, Skłodowska-Curie, Planck, Heisenberg, and Einstein. Quite a journey, with stops along the way to visit Ockham and his razor and Popper and his chopper. This was later enriched by discussions of the Korzybski-Bachelard-Bois development of ‘epistemological profiles’, placing humans at various stages of epistemological sophistication, and relating those to modes of evaluating, to capabilities related to getting on in the world. Eventually, these lectures constituted the richest and most incisive presentations of such material that I have encountered in my (admittedly) vast reading in such matters. Stuart had it. And, of course, as those who ‘have it’ must, he knew it.

In 1985, after much urging by me as the editor then who had also become director of the Institute and was looking for some relief, Stuart finally accepted editorship of the *General Semantics Bulletin*. In that capacity he shepherded into careful print a significant number of papers and lectures that can hold first place in any academic or ‘thinking’ environment around

the world. Here is a list of the most obviously planetary ones (*Bulletin* number given in parentheses; Alfred Korzybski Memorial Lectures are marked AKML.) I have not listed reviews, although some of them, major essay-reviews, could well make the cut. Here's the list:

Karl Pribram, "Brain and Meaning" (52, AKML)

Allen Walker Read, "Is General Semantics Compatible with Utopianism?" (52)

Barbara E. Wright, "The Heredity-Environment Continuum: Holistic Approaches at 'One Point in Time' and in 'All Time'" (52)

George F. F. Lombard, "Evaluations: Proper and Improper. Beads in Search of a String" (53, AKML)

Evelyn Fox Keller, "Cognitive Repression in Contemporary Physics" (53)

Russell Meyers, "The Potentials of Neurosemantics for Modern Neuropsychology" (53, ALML)

James D. French, "General Semantics and Science: A Response to Richard W. Paul" (55)

Jeffrey A. Mordkowitz, "Korzybski, Colloids and Molecular Biology" (55)

Irene Ross Mayper, "General Semantics, Stare Decisis and Change Through Considerations of a New Ethics" (55)

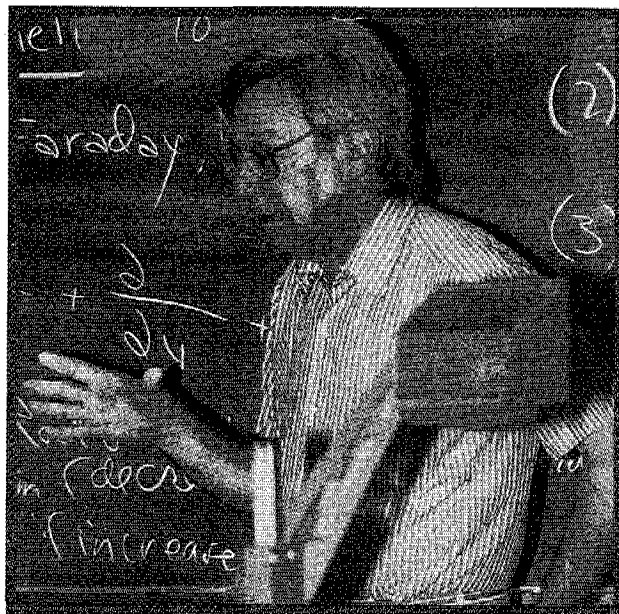
Edward MacNeal, "Apples and Oranges: Problems in Using Numbers Extensionally" (55)

Jerome Bruner, "Life and Language in Autobiography" (57, AKML)

Isabel Caro, Carolina Bellestar, Cristina Alarcón (Spain), "A Therapeutic Use of General Semantics: The Development of the Cognitive Therapy of Evaluation" (57)

Dominique Benoit (France), "General Semantics and Psychotherapy: Use of Personal Representations in Therapy" (57)

Albert Ellis, "General Semantics and Rational-Emotive Therapy" (58, AKML)



Stuart Mayper at an Institute summer seminar in the late 1980s.

Susan Presby Kodish, "General-Semantics as a Therapeutic Orientation" (58)

Martin Levinson, "Using General Semantics to Understand and Cope with Drug Abuse" (58)

William J. Haney, "People Managers Need Accurate Self-Maps" (59, AKML)

Allen Walker Read, "How Important is the Terminology of Korzybski's General Semantics?" (59)

Nicholas Johnson, "General Semantics: The Next Generation" (especially valuable for its 80 endnotes). (63)

Michael Hall, "An Integrated Model of Alfred Korzybski's General Semantics, Bandler/Grinder's Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Ellis' Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy, and Glasser's Reality Therapy/Control Theory" (63)

Jay Black, "General Semantics and the Ethics Agenda: New Challenges for the News Media" (63)

Joseph F. Fennelly, M.D., "Healing Medicine with Language" (63)

Bruce I. Kodish, "Contra Max Black: an Examination of Critiques of General Semantics" (64)

D. David Bourland, "In Defense of  $\Sigma$ os and E-Prime: a Reply to Dr. Allen Walker Read" (64)

Stuart also, while editor, beefed up the "Editorial" section of the *Bulletin*, contributing a series of essays that constituted his major writing in applied general semantics during his tenure as editor-in-chief, that is, until his death in November, 1997. I list them, with comment, in the annotated bibliography below.

I should say something of my personal knowledge of Stuart as a colleague and, well, buddy. We really dug each other. At the level of punning, horsing around, having drinks together, he is among my most cherished memories. At seminars I instituted what we called "Pula's Pub", a place to gather in the late evening (my room), where seminar participants could, if they wanted, discuss general semantics with relation to the day's activities (but not past 11 P.M.—my strict rule for the health of the participants, not to mention the staff), or just wind down after a tough day of listening, formulating, discussing, and making applications—in a word, fun. Stuart was a specialist at making well-balanced gin and tonics with fresh slice of lime. Sometimes he would fix me one before dinner, but most often he would show up at Pula's Pub, bottles, glasses, and green fruit in hand, and bartend away. Stuart knew most of what there was to know about conviviality.

As colleagues, we sometimes had minor disagreements about scientific issues; for example, Stuart insisted that when a person was sitting and thinking, no work was being done in Newton's sense. I maintained that, precisely Newtonian work was being accomplished at neuro-molecular, submicroscopic, electrochemical, etc., levels; I now hold that in a process, uni-substantial plenum (the 'universe'), just as there is no such thing as no structure, there is no such state as no work. We never did resolve that disagreement, but I'm happy to recall that Stuart (the guy with the Ph.D. in chemistry, research experience on the Manhattan Project, science teacher of long standing) respected my scientific

reasoning and opinions, even claiming on a few occasions that I had taught him something. But not nearly as much as he taught me, and not just in science.

As his teaching might lead us to expect, Stuart was also very much involved in his environment, the society in which he found himself embedded. I often say, half in jest when someone asks me to justify myself, "I'm just trying to do good and avoid evil." (This was, for the medieval scholastics, the "First Principle of the Natural Law".) Stuart was not a student of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, *et al*, but he did operate under a severe ethical-societal code.

That's why he was a leader in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) wherever he lived, most notably in his last years as a resident of Ridgefield, Connecticut. He was a much-appreciated citizen of his place-time. He was an inveterate writer of "letters to the editor", his subjects being civil rights, corrections for scientific misrepresentations in the press, and, most importantly, support for individuals facing a sometimes oppressive society. Related to this are his several letters to local draft boards in support of sincere conscientious objectors during the war in Vietnam. And his support of Amnesty International; anywhere when he perceived his fellow humans as being victims of what I call negative time-binding.

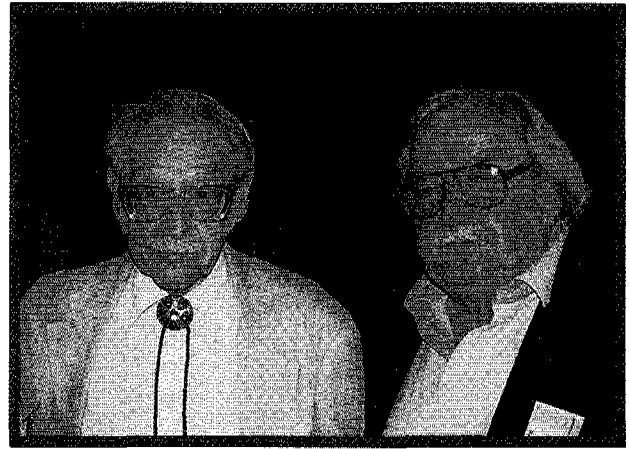
Now that Enzo (my fond nickname for him) is 'gone', his time-binding legacy resides in the eventually disintegrated 'electro-colloidal' structures called memory and, potentially 'permanently', in the significant set of writings he left behind. I'll conclude this gesture of love and respect with an annotated bibliography of Stuart A. Mayper's general-semantics writings as I have them on hand in Warsaw, Poland, where I am lecturing on and about general semantics and, in the process, further memorializing my friend.

My last days with Stuart were, in a summarizing way, characteristic. We were co-teaching the Advanced Seminar in General Semantics, which I instituted for our program for previously trained persons (summer seminar-work-

shops, etc.) who wished to be certified by the Institute as teachers of general semantics. Our program there (in 1997, at Mills College in Oakland, California), which followed the eight-day summer seminar-workshop of that year, was brutally simple: in four days we guided participants in a run-through of most of Korzybski's *Science and Sanity*. The pattern was simple. 'Students' were assigned a chapter of the book to read and make notes on for one hour. We would then reassemble as a group and each certificate-seeker would have ten minutes to report on what went on in his or her chapter. This was followed by comments by Dr. Mayper and Bob Pula, with further discussion by the group as needed. Then another chapter was assigned, following the same structure/procedure as before. This for four days, two chapters in the morning, lunch, another chapter and presentation in the afternoon. Very tough on the students; engaging also for the 'professors'.

For two days, Stuart held up quite well. By the third day, he had to leave the seminar area for extended periods, finally, in the afternoon session, excusing himself and not returning, necessitating our checking up on him in his room. He did not attend the fourth day sessions. Even during the last days of the seminar-workshop, I had found it necessary to support him in walking and, when he started to skip meals, take him bread and fruit and juice (all he could eat and drink) to his room. What we did not know was that Stuart was experiencing severe bleeding from his bladder; he was dying. But he was determined to finish the advanced seminar; to honor his contract. To, dear fellow, confirm his time-binding commitment. That, for me, is a far greater mode of courage than the brief bursts of fury required on the battlefields of history. As I have said elsewhere, "The heroic age is always the present"—in our day-to-day living.

On behalf of all readers of this document, and all of the people whose lives he so significantly touched, I say, "Farewell, Enzo. And thanks."



Stuart Mayper and Bob Pula  
Institute Summer Seminar (1997)

### An Annotated Bibliography of the General-Semantics Writings of Stuart A. Mayper

1. Stuart A. Mayper, "Non-Aristotelian Foundations: Solid or Fluid?" *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, February, 1962, pp. 427–443. A response to criticisms of Korzybski's non-Aristotelian stance, misunderstood as anti-Aristotelian by the likes of Max Black and others. Stuart early on shows his interest in sharp formulating, even formalism, that blossomed forth fully in his paper, "Tarskian Metalanguages and Korzybskian Abstracting", listed next.

2. Stuart A. Mayper, "Tarskian Metalanguages and Korzybskian Abstracting", *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 46, 1979, pp. 26–53. First published in the Dutch journal, *Methodology and Science*, in 1977, Stuart shows herein that, despite their mutual denials, especially on Alfred Tarski's part, Tarski's work and Korzybski's were, at formal levels, closely related. Indeed, in several passages in *Science and Sanity*, Korzybski acknowledged his debt to Tarski and other members (particularly Jan Lukasiewicz) of the famous Lwów-Warsaw school of multi-valued logic, symbolic logic, logistcs, etc. This manifests Stuart Mayper at his most rigorously formal. A good exercise for those who need some sharpening in their formulating.

3. Stuart A. Mayper, "The Place of Aristotelian

Logic in Non-Aristotelian Evaluating; Einstein, Korzybski and Popper”, *General Semantics Bulletin*, Special Commemorative Issue—100th Anniversary of the Birth of Alfred Korzybski (1879–1979)—No. 47, 1980, pp. 106–111. In this essay Stuart demonstrates that Korzybski did, indeed, construct a non-Aristotelian system, and that “the model of thinking, of a non-Aristotelian nature, is agreed on very substantially by Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist of the century, by Karl Popper, the greatest philosopher of the century, . . . and by Korzybski, the greatest system-builder of the century.”

4. Stuart A. Mayper, “Hayakawa as an Editor”, In Memoriam Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa, *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 57, 1993, pp. 27–30. Stuart recounts his dealings with Hayakawa when he was editor of *ETC*, commenting on Stuart’s articles, “The Zen Koan and the Lapidus Principle” (*ETC*, 17, September 1960, pp. 368–70) and his more formal “Non-Aristotelian Foundations” paper (no. 1 above). He touches on some perceived misevaluations of Hayakawa the U.S. senator, but concludes, “My fond memories are of him as the editor of *ETC*.— a great one!”

5. Stuart A. Mayper, “Korzybski’s Science and Today’s Science”, *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 51, 1984, pp. 61–67. Here Stuart, after presenting much information and Mayperian formulations from his rich background in science, concludes, “*Science and Sanity* was a book ahead of its time, and, fifty years later, it still is.”

6. Stuart A. Mayper, “Wu Li Thinking About Physics”, *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 51, 1984, pp. 68–82. A Review of Heinz R. Pagels, *The Cosmic Code*; Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*; Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, in which Mayper demolishes vague, popular notions about the anticipation of twentieth-century Western physics by Eastern-seated mystics. His telling pun “Wu Li thinking” tells the story. He summarizes his evaluations thusly: “This is a triple review, of three books that make a valiant attempt to explain modern physics to the layper-

son. I can characterize them bluntly by saying Pagels’ is a very good book with careless spots, Capra’s is a careless book with good spots, and Zukav’s is an infuriating book: so promising in prospect and so bad in execution.” Yes, Stuart Mayper could be incisively blunt when the requirements of responsible time-binding demanded it.

7. Stuart A. Mayper, “Critical Thinking vis-à-vis General Semantics”, *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 59, 1994, pp. 30–34. Stuart’s response to Richard Paul’s Alfred Korzybski Memorial Lecture of 1987 (*General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 55, 1990, pp. 24–37), reprinted from *Inquiry: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines*. Stuart’s ‘critical thinking’ response to some of Richard Paul’s mis-evaluations *in re* general semantics. Important clarifications by a master about general semantics and the role of science in human life.

8. Stuart A. Mayper, “Foundations Theme Introduction and Overview”, *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 63, 1996, pp. 14–17. Dr. Mayper’s overview of what was to be (and was) presented in the section, “Foundations”, at the conference, *Developing Sanity in Human Affairs: International Interdisciplinary Conference on General Semantics*, held at Hofstra University, November 2–4, 1996. Most importantly here, Stuart presents his rationale for introducing the usage “general-semantics” (with a hyphen) into the *Bulletin*, a usage now (unfortunately, in my view) voted against by a majority of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of General Semantics in June 1999, a vote that the new editor of the *Bulletin*, Jim French, approves, so you won’t see it here-in anymore (or for a while), but please continue to understand general semantics as a unitary term, a compound noun, not a noun preceded by an adjective.

### Selected Editorials

9. “General Semantics as a Religion?” *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 54, 1988/9, pp. 9–12. Mayper’s first full-blown theme essays as editorials begin here, essays which constituted

his major general-semantics writing from here on in—and out. (Don't wince at that. Stuart Mayer, man of wisdom and courage, would have chuckled at it.) Stuart, having characterized general semantics as "a representative of the first of non-Aristotelian systems, . . . something new in human history", concludes that "in the sense in which we term G-S non-Euclidean, non-Newtonian, non-Aristotelian—'non' meaning beyond and more general—I must call it non-religious."

10. "Reforming the Language", *General Semantics Bulletin* No. 55, 1990, pp. 19–23. A wickedly witty, subtle excursion into the thicket of conscious language change designed to make it 'better'. In reviewing the history of such efforts, starting with Quaker efforts in the late 1600s to 'democratize' general usage by addressing everyone, including King Charles II, as *Thee* or *Thou*, until then used only for intimates or inferiors, Stuart demonstrates his phenomenal knowledge of general cultural history. (He was adept at correcting my occasional misquotations from Shakespeare.) He then makes a strong case for changing the name of the discipline we work in, general semantics, noting that giving that name to it was "Korzybski's greatest mistake". Here, too, he reviews suggestions that have been made by others, then presents his cogent case for "general-semantics", with the uniting hyphen. He discusses other linguistic reforms, concluding with references to Bourland's E-Prime, a discussion of many forms of the verb "to be", including his suggestions for additions (not deletions, as in E-Prime and Allen Walker Read's EMA [English Minus Absolutes]) to how we use that verb. He concludes with his formulation, playful yet structurally intriguing, of E+: "So we now have an Enriched English, with redefined verbs emerging from the 'to be' complex. E+ now am!"

11. Stuart A. Mayer, "Creating Race and Ethnicity", *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 57, pp. 8–13. More than any previous editor of the *Bulletin*, Stuart Mayer used his editorial chair

as a launching mechanism from which he could address and ship out his evaluations of important socio-cultural issues from a general-semantics point of view, showing his way of applying that orientation. The results, as I have been indicating, were telling, insightful, often powerful in analysis and implication. This editorial is one of those. Stuart tackles the vexed questions of 'race', 'blood', 'ethnicity', etc., formulating in a rigorous, humane scientific (general semantics) way. He gives us a powerful searchlight (not mere flashlight) for seeing our way out of imposed, often overdefined by intension definitions (stereotypes, both negative and positive) to personal self-definition. I recommend that you revisit this essay frequently as a prophylactic against being sucked into facile 'categorizing' of our fellow humans; that behavior that our culture is still so full of. (For an extended discussion, see [eventually] my completed but not yet published book, *The Non-Identifying Person: Personal Self-Restructuring for the Extra-Planetary Era*.)

12. Stuart A. Mayer, "Of Psychotherapy, Race, and Ethnicity", *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 58, pp. 8–11. Dr. Mayer here continues and expands his editorial of *Bulletin* 57 (above), emphasizing, in response to that *Bulletin's* emphasis on psychotherapeutic applications of general semantics and the presence in this one of Albert Ellis's *Alfred Korzybski Memorial Lecture* (1991), "General Semantics and Rational-Emotive Therapy" (now known officially as "Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy"). "We must supplement discussion of this most burning issue of our time, one which can well use a psychotherapeutic application of general-semantics." Stuart then provides a devastating survey of anomalies in 'racial' category terminology used by the Census Bureau and its respondents. One amusing one (may I be amused in this context?): "In 1990 . . . 8% of the 1.8 million people who said they were American Indian . . . identified themselves as members of these tribes: Haitian, Polish, African-American, Hispanic or Arab" (*New*

*York Times*, May 9, 1993). (I, for one, am *very* interested in meeting the members of that 'Polish' tribe of American Indians, or Native Americans, as now called. I know that there was intermarriage of Poles [mostly men] with Native Americans [mostly women] in the nineteenth century, but I hadn't expected that it was a tribe's worth.) Stuart shows that the situation is no better, perhaps worse, in education, where, because of privileges (or withholding of privileges) related to a person's racial designation, passions and resentments are engaged. There have been isolated attempts to remedy this situation, notably in California, but Stuart's descriptions seem still *au courant*. He moves on to what he calls "ethnimandering": "the construction of electoral districts so as to give some ethnic group of residents a large advantage, assuming that they will vote for 'one of their own' to represent them". His analysis and citations (the Supreme Court, New York's then chief education spokesman, Al Shanker, and others) show his typical control of his materials. The piece ends with this: "The three items of the title of this piece I view as inevitably connected, and urge that we apply the first of them to the problems of the other two. To that end I reiterate a pair of proposals: let each person choose his/her own myth of ethnicity; and let us restore a prosaic sanity to our political maps."

13. Stuart A. Mayper, "Evaluating with Relativity", *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 59, 1994, pp. 8-12. Another Mayperian gem; Mayper the concerned master teacher, the scientist-humanist-time-binder, exercising himself very much for his fellows through exercising himself very strenuously for himself. His central concern here is that we (readers of the *Bulletin*, students of general semantics) do not get caught up in regressions to absolutistic, certainist stances because we fear being cast as 'relativists' in some indifferent sense. Stuart: "Now, we general-semanticists claim that relativity and indeterminacy, cornerstones of the twentieth-cen-

tury's rebuilding of science, furnish the 'metaphysics' that underlies our discipline. Does this mean that we act on the principle that 'any man's opinion is as good as anyone else's'? or that our sophisticated skepticism, based on the trust that nothing is certain, prevents us from making judgements about human behavior? Anyone who has read a line of Korzybski, Wendell Johnson, Harry Weinberg, etc., or lived through a general-semantics seminar can hardly take that assessment seriously." Stuart then surveys, via Paul Kurtz, various modes of skepticism, distinguishing 'hopeless' modes from 'positive' ones—namely, among possible others, general semantics—then, of all things, concluding that, eventually, in judging language, good and bad, we must "achieve the attitude prescribed by the title of an article of Robert Pula's: 'Knowledge, Uncertainty, and Courage'."

14. Stuart A. Mayper, "Our Object All Sublime", *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 60, pp. 8-10. Stuart's apparently light-hearted reference here to his beloved Gilbert and Sullivan masks a grim concern for the appropriateness of the death sentence for, admittedly, serious crime in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. His envoi from Justice Harry Blackmun's dissenting opinion of February 22, 1994 (Fryderyk Chopin's birthday) sets the tone: "From this day forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death." So the death sentence is seen as, at least a paragraph, perhaps, more appropriately, a very long novel, with, like *Tristram Shandy*, a very uncertain end. Stuart addresses here Korzybski's suggestion that there should be an element of time-binding voluntarism in death-sentence cases, where the acceptance of death by a miscreant involves a positive (time-binding) social good: the prisoner agrees to donate his life, not as a meaningless 'victim' of state vengeance, but as a straightforward contribution of an already wasted and lost life to the general human weal. I emphasize the *voluntary* aspect. Giving, instead of being merely taken. More than is usual for him, Stuart quotes



Korzybski copiously here, the propositions being so strong and, for some, unsettling. After this characterization, can you refrain from revisiting this essay?

15. Stuart A. Mayper, "Back to the Structural Differential", *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 63, pp.8–10. Preparing this bibliography in Warsaw, Poland, in December 1999, I am perforce (as Russ Meyers liked to say) required to depend on what I have here to work with. Fortunately, the ever-thorough Stuart Mayper, in his editorial to this *Bulletin*, lists what he covered in those, for me, missing issues: "Nos. 60 [covered previously] and 62, 'Capital Punishment': Korzybski's proposal for eliminating this barbarism . . ." No. 61, "Free Speech and the Level Playing Field": "One vital purpose free speech serves is to inform and arouse the public about opinions they may feel a need to combat; that such useful speech can therefore be offensive is no excuse for trying to stifle it. With regard to reforming political campaigns, I suggested that contributions to them should be without restrictions, BUT: expenditures should be tightly controlled by pooling all the funds for a given office and *dividing them equally* among all the registered nominees for it." The editorial in *Bulletin* 63 begins with this important reminder: "**The Structural Differential**, our indispensable Map of the Mapping Process." He then discusses some objections to the Structural Differential (that structure for differentiating structures), among them the (mis-

understanding) complaint that 'higher' order abstractions are 'down' on the model-diagram. Stuart then explains that 'up' and 'down' on the Structural Differential do not represent position in relation to the surface of the Earth, but relative 'nearness' and 'distance' from the process-event and object levels of abstracting and 'lateness' in space-time. The Structural Differential is a relatively static representation of a dynamic process in space-time.

16. Stuart A. Mayper, "The Average Intelligent Voter", *General Semantics Bulletin*, No. 64, pp. 92–95. Stuart, fortunately, completed this editorial before his death. It demonstrates his life-long fascination with the political process and elections. He gathered his information from sources representing a continuum from one end of the political spectrum to the other. In this editorial, Stuart makes no effort to disguise his delight with the voters in 1996 who chose a candidate who "waffled" (Clinton), "accepting uncertainty, tentativeness, relativity" over a candidate (Dole) "endorsing stability, tradition, fiscal dependability".

Thus ended a not massive body of work in written general semantics, but, under the aspect of quality and structural-formulational integrity, Stuart Mayper's writings constitute a treasure; better yet, a treasury from which we can ongoingly draw when we need clear explanations of knotty issues. He has given us the opportunity to upgrade our time-binding.

Bob Pula, José Klingbeil,  
Stuart Mayper, Homer Moore  
at the Alfred Korzybski  
Research and Study Center  
(Advanced Training Seminar,  
Winter 1996–97, in Closter,  
New Jersey).



## About Stuart Mayer

By

Charlotte Schuchardt Read

The first words which come to me when I think of Stuart are “gentleman” and “scholar”. But these I quickly pass by as too limiting, too ordinary. No limits could possibly be set upon such a creative, multifaceted, extra-ordinary person.

Readers of the *General Semantics Bulletin* are familiar with his probing, witty questioning of some serious issues, setting forth his fresh viewpoints.

In our Institute trustee meetings and other discussions, often Stuart remained silent for some time listening to what others said. Then came his simple question pin-pointing some neglected point which, when asked, seemed obvious, but put the issue in a fundamentally new light.

As the editor of the *GSB*, he labored over each article, wishing to bring out the best in the article, to develop what the author wished to say while preserving the author’s intent, but rigorous in his editing.

In his teaching he explored the historic range of western scientific and epistemological development in a simple way. Engrossed in this process himself, it was not easy for him to curtail his enthusiasm and his meticulous, detailed accounts for those in our seminars who were not ready for them, but it was necessary.

I remember him singing his favorite ballads—and he knew many—performing his favorite act at our parties. I miss turning to him for his advice on a French translation, or on the reliability of an author of a scientific book.

Everywhere, his unassuming thoughtfulness, his kindness, his conscientious concern came through. Wishing not to impose, he stated his own thoughts forthrightly.

We will remember him always with deep appreciation and affection.

# A Remembrance of Stuart Mayer

By

Susan Presby Kodish

Stuart Mayer, admired and loved by me for his Renaissance-man brilliance; sly, at times biting, wit; skill with language; good humor, warmth, supportive friendship; sharp questions; for exemplifying living as a scientist/general semanticist nigh (as he taught me to say) whenever and wherever he was.

Some examples:

Stuart, for me, represented scientific skepticism at its nigh best: a skeptic who could act skeptical about skepticism. I might scoff at something to me apparently absurd, like the ability of a large group of people to redirect a comet approaching earth, if they focus in concert on this goal; Stuart, albeit skeptically rather than credulously, would take part in the experiment. Hmmm (stroking chin) . . . Why not?

When asked to read and comment on the first draft of our book, *Drive Yourself Sane*, Stuart's first comment was something like, "I was relieved when I got to the second chapter." Uh oh, what was wrong with the first chapter? Nothing. Rather, his relief came with the first "is" in the second chapter; having seen none in the first chapter, he was worried that we were writing it in E-Prime. What a delightful (and typically sly) way to express his opinion.

Stuart, being to us, in Harry Stack Sullivan's expression, more human than otherwise, wasn't 'perfect'. Yet even his 'imperfections' could be charming (well, most of the time). For example, he was loathe to give up on the possibility that he could fix anything that wasn't working properly, whether it be, in our direct experience, a computer or an old car. Getting stuck in his old station wagon while he was supposedly giving us a ride to a meeting led to my taking a very unpleasant, very long walk on a very hot day, so as not to be late, having already waited through a few failed attempts on his part to get the car going for more than half a block. Triple A was not called; he fiddled, as he had done numerous times before and would do again, and somehow got it running, and himself to the meeting.

Yet a similar kind of fiddling, with numbers and demonstrations when he was teaching (again, hmmms, with chin-stroking), led me to a greater appreciation of the methodical, carefully considered, experimental approach of a scientist at work. A fine lesson, although one not applied by me to computers and cars.

Stuart provided warm support to me at a difficult time. When I had chemotherapy in 1997, we compared notes on its effects on us. He reminded me that he had lost his hair, too (as if I could forget how he utilized his baldness by affecting a holder-held cigarette [unlit] and playing Korzybski), and had grown hair where he could—in the form of a mustache—laughingly allowing that this approach probably wouldn't be very becoming for me. He left me laughing, too.

I miss him.

# A Memory of Stuart Mayer

By

**Bruce I. Kodish**

Stuart was like a multifaceted diamond. Under the right light, his quiet brilliance shone brightly, and he often surprised me with some remarkable display of a facet of which I had no inkling, or had only seen a glimmer of, before.

Several years ago, at an IGS summer seminar-workshop where Stuart and I both taught, I began one evening of after-dinner activities with a short, outdoor exercise experiment in nonverbal awareness and listening. I began by reading what I considered an evocative poem by Goethe as translated into English by the renowned poet, Robert Bly.

On the tops of all the hills  
there is silence. In the  
tops of the trees, you feel  
hardly a breath. The little  
bird falls silent in the trees.  
Simply wait. Soon you too  
will be silent.

After reading this, I invited the participants, Stuart among them, to become as internally quiet as possible for several minutes and become aware of whatever sounds came to them. Afterward, we had a brief discussion during which a number of people described some of what they had experienced. We then broke up to walk inside for the rest of the

evening's session.

While we walked toward the classroom, Stuart came up to me and said, "Bruce, I find that translation rather irritating. I have a better version. I'll get it to you later." I felt intrigued. What would Stuart come up with?

The next day, Stuart handed me a piece of paper in his handwriting which contained what I reproduce below: Goethe's original German and Stuart's English translation:

## WANDRERS NACHTLIED II

Über allen Gipfeln / ist Ruh,  
In allen Wipfeln / spürest Du  
Kaum einen Hauch.  
Die Vöglein schweigen im  
Walde;  
Warte nur, balde  
Rühest Du auch.

## WANDERER'S NIGHTSONG II

Over every hilltop / is peace.  
Sounds which the woods drop  
now cease;  
You hear not a sigh.  
The birdlings hush in their nest;  
Only wait, your rest  
comes by and by.

—J. W. v. Goethe / Stuart Mayer

## Stuart Mayer at Mills College

By

James D. French

Over a period of years, I had occasional contact with Stuart Mayer in his capacity as editor of this journal, and my role as author of a general-semantics essay or two. These contacts usually involved an exchange of letters and, once in a great while, a phone call. I never actually met him in person until I attended the Institute's 1997 "Advanced Seminar" in general semantics at Mills College in Oakland, California. By that time, his illness had progressed to its later stages. I think that everyone there marveled at the courage of this man, and his dedication to the science-oriented discipline he taught, loved, and espoused. He 'should' have been in a hospital.

One task that I loved was to chauffeur Stuart and Bob Pula in my car to the cafeteria; a necessary task, as it was some distance away from our rooms. We all enjoyed talking and being together on those brief jaunts.

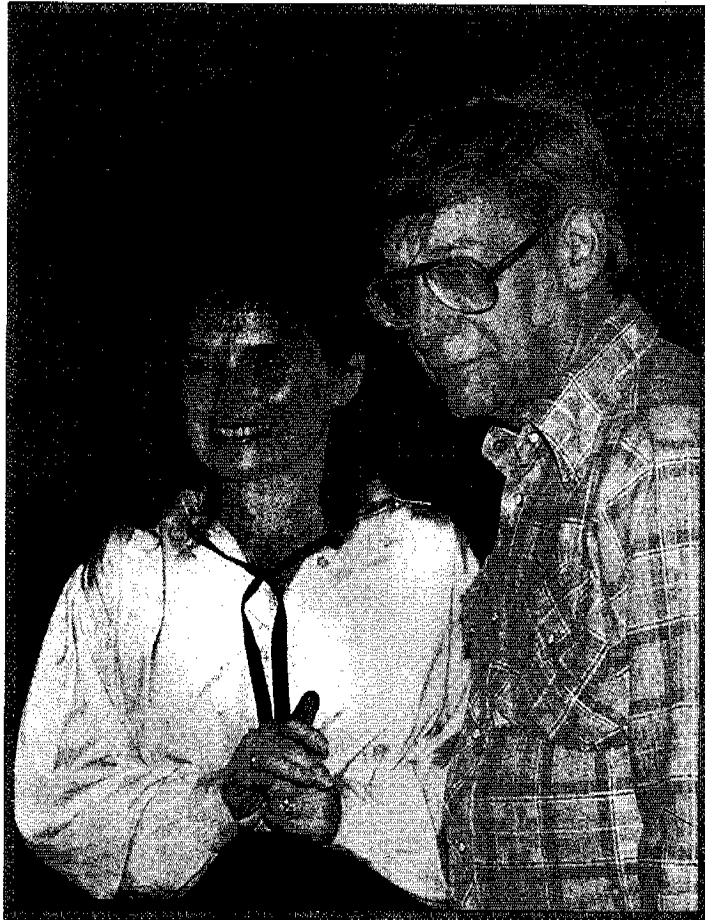
But I remember particularly one afternoon, when I had somehow gotten separated from Stuart and Bob after we got to the cafeteria (that was not unusual, as we sometimes went our separate ways). I was standing at the cash register, at the head of a long U-shaped line of very young and energetic summer-school students (clearly, not of our group). They looked to be about seventeen or eighteen years old. And at the very end of this very long line stood

Stuart, all alone: looking forlorn, clutching his tray, barely able to stand. Obviously, he was in pain of some sort. The contrast between the young, healthy (and seemingly uncaring) students and Stuart's age and illness, really affected me. It did not seem right or fair that he should have to stand and wait patiently at the end of that long line while they sauntered slowly ahead of him in the casual ways of the young.

I looked at him. He probably knew right away what was bothering me. My eyes panned over the line and then back to him again, as I signaled my meaning. I took a step toward him, and nodded toward the cash register. Though the meaning was not expressed in words, he clearly grasped my intent: "Stuart, you are ill; come to the head of this line."

But he would have none of it. He suddenly stiffened to a ramrod posture, pulled his tray firmly into his waist, and turned completely away from me, staring boldly at the back of the neck of the student in front of him. "No way, Jose."

And so I stood there, somewhat embarrassed, watching him standing so straight, like a military cadet. It is hard now to fully convey the feeling of strong affection toward him that suddenly came over me. In a way I had learned 'all' that I needed to know about the character of Stuart Mayer then.



Judge Irene Ross (Mayper) with Stuart, about 1981

## Stuart Mayer: Life's Thoughtful Observer

By

Linette Burton

Reprinted with permission from the *Ridgefield Press*, April 29, 1989

As a literate, humorous observer of the passing scene, Stuart Mayer of Brookside Road shares his observations via letters to the Ridgefield Press, to *New York Times* columnist William Safire, and other publications.

While many citizens may mutter fruitlessly about things that disturb or delight them, Mr. Mayer quite sensibly expresses his feelings in writing.

### Sensible Solution

Case in point: When there was a big brouhaha in town a couple of years ago about the fate of a stately elm tree at the edge of the Grand Union parking lot, Mr. Mayer was on the side of saving the Main Street elm from potential bulldozer destruction.

Yet he was realistic enough to consider traffic flow. He wrote a quiet letter suggesting that since Prospect Street enters Main Street at a slant the Grand Union driveway could be constructed at a slant, saving the elm.

The crisis passed, the store's driveway remained as it always had been and the elm flourishes.

Mr. Mayer wrote a letter to the Press in answer to a correspondent who claimed that the Reagan administration had lowered the unemployment rate considerable. Mr. Mayer looked up the U.S. labor statistics that showed that while unemployment had been cut since the Carter administration, it shortly went back up again to a 10.8% high.

When GIST, Ridgefield High School's Global Issues for Students and Teachers group, had a speaker who spoke in favor of Star Wars, Mr. Mayer criticized the speaker's views.

"Even though I'm not an expert (on the subject) I could consider it a fantasy. It reminded me of the Maginot line when the French didn't think the Germans would go around it," he said wryly.

He wrote to William Safire regarding the complexity of writing a letter when you didn't know the sex of the recipient. Mr. Mayer suggested the non-sexist term "Gentlefolk" as a greeting.

### Space Gun

The Press recently had a story about Mr. Steven Aaron and his "space gun," poised on the Shores of Lake Mamasasco to intercept UFO's.

After reading it, Stuart forwarded information about Wilhelm Reich, a renegade scientist whose inventions included a similar device that the inventor claimed could both bring down UFO's and make rain. Mr. Reich, who died in 1956, also invented an orgone accumulator, a box that he said people could sit in to cure a variety of ailments. They would soak up accumulated orgone, a new form of energy Mr. Reich believed he had discovered.

Mr. Aaron called the *Press* to discuss reaction to the article about his space gun and was given Stuart Mayer's name. He called him

and, Mr. Mayper said, confirmed that his device had indeed had its genesis in Mr. Reich's theories. He asked Mr. Mayper if he believes in UFO's.

"I said no," Mr. Mayper said pleasantly. "I'm amazed at what people believe. Take tales of poltergeist, for instance. You can indicate some alternatives to what happens. Psychologists have observed that most cases involving poltergeist occur in a house with slightly disturbed teenagers."

### Skeptical Inquirer

Not surprisingly, Mr. Mayper subscribes to a publication called the *Skeptical Inquirer*, published by the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal.

A retired professor of chemistry, he is married to Irene Ross Mayper, a legal expert. He earned his bachelor's degree at City College of New York, his masters and doctorate at Ohio State and he taught at Queens College, at Brandeis University and for 29 years at the University of Bridgeport where he became chairman of the chemistry department.

He is active in the A.C.L.U. and the American Association of University Professors, an organization he serves as a grievance officer.

And he's a baseball fan, loves to swim at Martin Park (Great Pond) and is glad "they forestalled the development of the property across the pond."

Asked about the Lodestar court battle he said, "I think the school board has been irresponsible in not clarifying their directives. The superintendent is not coming to grips with the major issue. As I understand it, the school paper is not part of the curriculum so the Board of Education shouldn't concern itself

with Lodestar's publication."

### Tempest in a Teapot

On the matter of black and white versus colored signs in town Mr. Mayper says, "I was thinking of writing a letter to the editor saying that the whole thing is the greatest tempest in a teapot.

"Gas stations may only have black and white signs but the posters and billboards there are all different colors. I don't see any harm in them; the original settlers loved to have colored signs."

Stuart and Irene were introduced to Ridgefield in 1983 when they visited their friend Thomas Nelson of Bennetts Farm Road. They bought the first house they were shown here, and since then Stuart has taken a lively interest in his town.

### General Semantics

But overriding local and national concerns (he thinks that "in some aspects President Bush is more thoughtful than President Reagan but less powerful") are his longtime activities with the Institute of General Semantics.

"General semantics is a study of why people react to symbols connected to the way their nervous systems work," Mr. Mayper said. "It's a theory of human evaluation. The point is to change your habits of evaluating and so change your way of life."

Mr. Mayper is editor-in-chief of the *General Semantics Bulletin*, which reaches some 33 like-minded thinkers.

Delighted with his Ridgefield way of life, he takes time to evaluate the world around him.

What will next capture his attention?

"It all depends on what arises," Mr. Mayper answered with a smile.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation. —New Testament (AV), James 5:12.



## Mayper's Semantical Reach

To the Editor:

Thank you, Linette Burton and the *Ridgefield Press*, for the gentle portrayal in the April 27 issue, though I fear my family would question the placidity that pervades that character with my name.

But that's not what calls forth one more letter to The Press. It is this description of my editorial baby: ". . . the *General Semantics Bulletin*, which reaches some 33 like-minded thinkers."

Thirty-three! Probably a typographical accident, since the figure I gave Mrs. Burton was "about 300"—and while most of those are in the U.S., the rest are scattered over six continents! Our list of subscribing libraries num-

bers more than 80, including universities as close as Yale, and as distant as Witwatersrand in South Africa, or Warrnambool Institute in Victoria, Australia.

To rid ourselves of harmful modesty, and to celebrate the part Ridgefield has (unwittingly) played in the history of general semantics, I will see that the Ridgefield Public Library is provided with some back issues and the forthcoming No. 54, our 1988/89 opus, to begin with.

Once our townspeople start thumbing the *Bulletin*, who knows what may evolve.

**Stuart Mayper**

26 Brookside Road, May 1.



Stuart Mayper camping in Wisconsin,  
1995 or 1996