

Groundbreaking Work Examining Race within Psychoanalysis Earns American Dorothy E. Holmes, PhD, The Sigourney Award-2022

Seattle, WA — Nov. 16, 2022 – The Sigourney Award is presented annually to reward work that advances psychoanalytic thought and principles worldwide, meriting international recognition and a substantial cash prize. Robin A. Deutsch, PhD and Analyst Co-Trustee of [The Sigourney Award Trust](#), is announcing today that **Dr. Dorothy E. Holmes’** landmark work examining race within psychoanalysis, and the work of four others, has earned The Sigourney Award-2022.

“By examining systemic racism and its role in psychoanalysis, Dr. Holmes is inspiring open discussion of discriminatory practices that impact racial equity in psychoanalytic treatment and training,” explains Dr. Deutsch. “Mary Sigourney’s intentions were to encourage and recognize significant contributions in advancing psychoanalytic principles and their ability to better humankind and we’re proud to honor Dr. Holmes’ groundbreaking work which meets these distinctive criteria.”

Dr. Holmes’ work observes that race is an essential lens for psychoanalytic understanding because racism has endemic intrapsychic and cultural effects, including traumatic ones. These effects are accessible in treatment wherein psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic institutions resist knowing and theorizing the deleterious impacts of racism and their resistances. Her work catalyzed open discussion of discriminatory practices in society and in psychoanalysis, and their harm about which psychoanalysis has traditionally been silent, both clinically and institutionally. Rather than seeing race as an obstacle to deeper work, Holmes posited that when race is acknowledged and addressed, it may lead to more just practices in therapy and beyond. Her efforts demonstrated that personal and organizational wellness cannot be achieved unless all aspects of one’s identity are claimed, resolved, and embraced, including though not limited to racial identity. Applying clinical and organizational uses of psychoanalytic thinking holistically, Holmes’ methodology has helped address systemic racism within psychoanalytic organizations and promote racial equity. She even ventured into psychoanalytic institutional protests designed to maintain racism as a “sleeping dog” employing liberatory psychoanalytic principles and tools to understand racism clinically and institutionally.

“My body of work demonstrates that psychoanalysis has the conceptual and clinical tools to understand systemic racism and how it operates intra-psychically and behaviorally, in the individual and in psychoanalytic institutional practices,” says Dr. Holmes. “My work also demonstrates that this understanding is necessary to promote robust wellness in patients, white and of color, and in psychoanalytic organizations for them to promote racial equity by reducing attachment to white privilege.”

Reaching beyond the traditional patient/analyst setting, Dr. Holmes applies her approach in her social justice commitment. Her recent psychoanalytic equity work theorizes the intrapsychic and institutional elements of resistance to recognizing the central role of race in society in general and in psychoanalysis (e.g., use of primal defenses against recognition of racial hatred, clinging to white privilege).

Her thought leadership in challenging institutional psychoanalysis and encouraging the field to engage in self-examination and active change led the American Psychoanalytic Association (APsaA) to create The Holmes Commission on Racial Equality in the American Psychoanalytic Association, for which Holmes serves as its distinguished chair. The commission now investigates “systemic racism and its underlying determinants embedded within APsaA and independent psychoanalytic institutions,” and offers “remedies for all aspects of identified racism” in psychoanalytic institutions across different governing bodies.

She is a Training and Supervising Analyst at the Psychoanalytic Center of the Carolinas and IPTAR, Training and Supervising Analyst, Emerita, the Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis, Professor and PsyD Program Director Emerita, George Washington University, and a member, emerita, of Black Psychoanalysts Speak. Holmes articulates the necessity for psychoanalysis to understand racist hatred that is carried widely in the culture and individually, and she shows that persistent racial unknowing is practiced in psychoanalytic institutions through silence, political intimidation, and disappearing in the face of repeated painful racial enactments.

“Our independent panel of distinguished judges have the difficult task of identifying the most outstanding contributions among our international applicants, and we honor their professional guidance as we strive to fulfill Mary Sigourney’s intent to reward work that significantly advanced psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic principles worldwide. We welcome The Sigourney Award-2022 recipients to our esteemed roster and look forward to recognizing novel advancements of others in the coming years,” says Barbara Sherland, J.D., Attorney Co-Trustee of The Sigourney Award Trust.

Dr. Holmes’ award-winning work is added to a long list of innovative contributions advancing psychoanalytic thought that, since 1990, have been honored with The Sigourney Award. This year, she shares this honor with Dr. Giuseppe Civitarese (Pavia, Italy), Dr. Jack Drescher (New York, USA), Professor Alessandra Lemma (London, UK), and Dr. Edward Tronick (Massachusetts, USA), whose work also met the demanding Award criteria.

Visit [The Sigourney Award](https://www.sigourneyaward.org) website to review all recipients’ Award announcements, and in early 2023 watch for individual video introductions from each. The Sigourney Award-2023 application period opens March 2023 for qualifying work completed between 2012 and 2022. Stay updated via social platforms for The Sigourney Award on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn @SigourneyAward, and Twitter @sigourney_the.

THE SIGOURNEY AWARD®

About The Sigourney Award

The Sigourney Award Trust, an independent nonprofit organization established by Mary Sigourney in 1989, annually bestows The Sigourney Award as international recognition and reward for outstanding work that has advanced psychoanalytic principles. Ms. Sigourney was a psychotherapist, publisher, and community activist who had a passionate interest in psychoanalysis and understood its ability to benefit and extend human conversation across various disciplines. To date, 141 Award recipients from 22 countries represent her global vision. Work honored by The Sigourney Award has significantly contributed to human affairs on topics ranging from clinical psychoanalysis, neuroscience, feminism, and political oppression. Since 1990, The Sigourney Award has rewarded and promoted outstanding work. Judges of The Sigourney Award remain anonymous to ensure an unbiased and thorough evaluation practice.

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