

## **John William Money, 84, Sexual Identity Researcher, Dies**

By Benedict Carey

From The New York Times

July 11, 2006

John William Money, who helped found the field of sexual identity studies, died Friday in Towson, Md. He was 84. The cause was complications of Parkinson's disease, said Dr. Money's niece Sally Hopkins.

A psychologist at Johns Hopkins University for over 50 years, Dr. Money brought a measure of scientific compassion to a field that through the 1950's considered cases of sexual ambiguity as oddities, glitches in the natural order of biologically determined sexuality. In papers on infants born with ambiguous genitalia and in later studies, Dr. Money challenged those assumptions, providing a systematic theory for understanding how sexual identity developed. He argued that social and environmental cues interacted with a child's genes and hormones to shape whether the person identified as male or female.

"He was the first scientist to provide a language to describe the psychological dimensions of human sexual identity; no such language had existed before," said Dr. Kenneth J. Zucker, psychologist in chief at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto.

Early in his career, Dr. Money coined the terms "gender identity," to describe the internal experience of sexuality, and "gender role," to refer to social expectations of male and female behavior. The two concepts still drive much research into sexual identity. He was among the first scientists to study the psychological experience of sexual confusion and to grasp possible ways to relieve suffering. He was an early proponent of sex reassignment surgery for men and women who believed that their biologically given sex was at odds with their sexual identity. His influential 1969 book, "Transsexualism and Sex Reassignment," written with Dr. Richard Green, helped bring the surgery wider acceptance.

In studies, he tracked the progress of "intersex" children — infants born with ambiguous genitals — who were raised as boys or girls. He also consulted frequently with parents who were trying to decide how to raise a child with ambiguous or damaged genitals. In one of these cases, known as the "John/Joan" case, Dr. Money became embroiled in a controversy that was discussed widely and repeatedly in books and on television.

After consulting with Dr. Money in 1966, the parents of a young boy whose penis had been destroyed in a botched circumcision decided to raise their son as a girl. In 1973, Dr. Money reported that the child, who had been castrated and furnished with dresses and dolls, was doing well, and had accepted the new identity as a girl.

But in a 1997 report in *The Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, a pair of researchers provided a detailed follow-up: the boy had repudiated his female identity at age 14 and had even had surgery to reconstruct his genitals. The report caused an uproar, and Dr. Money was criticized in news reports and in a book on the case. In

2004, the man who had reclaimed his sex committed suicide. His family blamed the effort to change his sex.

Dr. Money was mortified by the case, colleagues said, and as a rule did not discuss it. "Given what the field knew at the time, Money made the right call about what to do" with the child, said Dr. Green, his co-author and former colleague and an emeritus professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. "It's easy in hindsight to say it was wrong, but I would have done the same thing."

Doctors today are far more wary of trying to re-engineer biology, particularly in rare cases of badly damaged genitals, when the genetic sex is clear. Recent studies have emphasized the importance of prenatal exposure to hormones in shaping sexual identity.

Dr. Money was born near Auckland, New Zealand, and grew up near Wellington. He was a star student at the University of Otago and became an instructor there before winning a grant to study at the University of Pittsburgh in 1947. He later went to Harvard for graduate work, and in 1951 arrived at Johns Hopkins, where he spent the rest of his career.

"The forces of antisex cry in moral outrage when confronted with the evidence of sexual disabilities, and blame the new freedom," he wrote in a 1975 Op-Ed article in The New York Times titled "Recreational — and Procreational — Sex."

"In fact," he continued, "they should blame the excess of inhibition and punishment regarding sex during the childhood of those whose sexuality is now disabled."

Dr. Money was married briefly in the 1950's. He is survived by eight nieces and nephews.