

# The TAMFT Marriage and Family

# NEWS



Tennessee Division of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

November 2009

## Linda Oxford Receives Award!

By Judith R. Roney

One of our own, President Linda Oxford, received one of three AAMFT Divisional Contribution Awards presented on October 2 at the 2009 AAMFT Annual Conference in Sacramento, California. This award recognizes past or current Divisional Presidents that have made significant and long-standing contributions to the well-being of the division, demonstrated significant and long-standing leadership, contributed to the education of MFTs in a graduate training program or post-degree training program, conducted major presentations at divisional conferences, made significant and long-standing contributions to MFT through service as a community leader, demonstrated active leadership within the Council of Division Presidents, and advanced the discipline of MFT and use of a family systems framework as a means for working with the individuals, couples/partners, families, and wider social systems in our society.

Having been on AAMFT's Divisional Awards committee for two years, I know something of the

standards required to receive this award. From a list of 10 criteria, one has to demonstrate outstanding contributions in at least 6 of them. Linda has done that and more. She has more than 25 years of experience in working as a therapist, trainer, supervisor, educator, and consultant in both public and private sectors. Specializations include solution-focused, action methods of therapy with individuals, couples, families and groups; crisis intervention; professional ethics and risk management; professional development; and working with large systems such as churches, professional organizations, businesses and community groups.

Her qualities run deeper than any of us knows. She holds herself and others to high standards of practice, ethics, and service professionally and personally. She has served this division and this profession in ways too numerous to list here and has received TAMFT's Dedicated Service to the Division Award twice. She has developed superior expertise in ethical practice and has dedicated herself to educating professionals as well as churches and organizations in raising their standards. She has given 100 presentations to conferences and groups in several states, with TAMFT being a frequent benefactor of these, and will be again in our 2010 conference. She does not shy away from difficult problems indicated by her leadership in reducing family violence. When her church fled the inner city, she and Jim did not. They continue to live in the inner city, restore old homes, and are concerned with environmental conservation. How does she do all this? It is simple when you consider her work ethic. With the dynamo team of Linda Oxford, Richard Gillespie, and the legislative committee, there is more legislative activity to benefit our profession than has occurred in a long time.

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## From The President

By Linda Oxford, M.A.R., M.S.S.W

Fall is finally here – and with it the anticipation of winding down the year, taking a moment to catch our collective breathes and breathe a prayer of thanksgiving, and prepare for a fresh start in January.

The 67<sup>th</sup> Annual AAMFT Conference was held in Sacramento, CA on October 1-4, focusing on “The Difference that Makes A Difference.” At the conference, MFTs celebrated our distinctive and unique profession, and our long-anticipated achievement of obtaining MFT licensure in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. We’ve come a long way from our humble beginnings as a motley crew of renegade professionals insisting that the quality of our relationships is perhaps the most critical element in our health and well-being.

The conference explored what makes family therapy effective, non-traditional ways in which MFTs are serving and influencing communities, and how we can respond to threats to our professional identity and future. Our success in establishing our professional vision has not come without a price. Although few human service professionals today would question the importance of relationship therapy, they would argue that couples and family therapy can be equally successfully provided by professionals other than MFTs. Debate continues about how much MFTs can be assimilated into dominant health care systems and still retain our unique identity and treatment perspective.

We face a huge challenge to our professional identity - are we to be known more as relationship specialists, or more as mental health generalists? This tension has played itself out in conversation, debate, organizational programming, and in how we have positioned the profession in advocacy and other efforts.

To the extent that MFT is seen as relationship enhancement, it is less likely to be eligible for third party reimbursement or considered in research or policy debates. MFTs become relegated to the margins of the health

care delivery system. Alternatively, if MFTs are included in those systems, they become absorbed and assimilated by the medical model focused on “cure,” and the distinctiveness of a systemic orientation and relationship component of health is diminished.

What matters more to us today– that the service of marriage and family therapy is delivered by any practitioner who can do it, regardless of their professional title or license, or that marriage and family therapists, trained and licensed as such, can obtain jobs, reimbursement, and recognition for the range of services they provide?

Major questions of identity and emphasis continue to challenge MFTs and AAMFT:

1. Are we mental health generalists or relationship specialists?
2. Are we marriage and family therapists or providers of relationship education?
3. Should the major emphasis of AAMFT be on promotion of the practice of marriage and family therapy or on the professional positioning of marriage and family therapists?
4. Are we cooperative or competitive with other professional disciplines that practice MFT?

TAMFT joins AAMFT in seeking members’ feedback about how the association can best serve their professional needs and preferences and help them successfully meet the challenges and opportunities they face in their practice of marriage and family therapy.

Please add your voices to this animated conversation – we will be continuing it at our 2010 TAMFT Annual Conference, What Really Works?, on February 26-27 at the Holiday Inn, Opryland/ Airport in Nashville, TN.

Also, please mark your calendars for the :  
1) AAMFT Institutes for Advanced Clinical Training March 3-7, 2010 at Edgewater Beach Resort in Panama City Beach, FL, and the  
2) AAMFT 2010 Annual Conference September 23-26, 2010 in Atlanta, GA at the Atlanta Convention Center.

## From the Conference Chair

By Dianne Bradley

We are only a few short months away from the upcoming 2010 TAMFT Conference ... "What Really Works?" featuring Scott Miller, PhD, as our keynote speaker, great workshops planned, a preconference supervisor refresher course, and a new event ... "Networking Speed Dating Lunch". We also have several new sponsors and exhibitors participating, so we should have many new faces and organizations to join us in February. We have adjusted student registration fees so that they are more affordable, and we have a brand new venue, the Holiday Inn, Airport/Opryland on Elm Hill Pike in Nashville. Following is information about each event.

### Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup>

Preconference : AAMFT Supervisor Refresher Course

9:00 - 4:00 (Lunch included)

Preregistration: 8:00 am - 9:00 am & 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

### Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup>

Registration: 8:00 am

Continental Breakfast: 8:00 - 8:45

Conference Starts : **Keynote Speaker - Scott Miller, PhD**

**"What Works: Learning from the Field's Most Effective Practitioners"**

Part 1: 9:00 - 12:00

Part 2: 1:30 - 5:00

**Scott D. Miller, Ph.D.** is a co-founder of the Center for Clinical Excellence, an international consortium of clinicians, researchers, and educators dedicated to promoting excellence in behavior health. Dr. Miller conducts workshops and training in the United States and abroad, helping hundreds of agencies and organizations, both public and private, to achieve superior results. He is one of a handful of "invited faculty" whose work, thinking, and research is featured at the prestigious "Evolution of Psychotherapy Conference." His humorous and engaging presentation style and command of the research literature consistently inspires practitioners, administrators, and policy makers to make effective changes in service delivery.

12:00 - 1:30

Awards Lunch

These awards honor members each year for continuous, meritorious and generative contribution toward the progress of marriage and family therapy.

Student poster competition winners will be announced as well.

Part 2: 1:30 - 5:00 Keynote Presentation

EXHIBITS : All Day

**NEW! STUDENT POSTER COMPETITION:** The awardees will be honored with a plaque, prize, and conference fee waiver. (Download entry form here: <http://www.tnamft.org/SPC.pdf> )

### Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup>

8:00 - 9:00 TAMFT Town Meeting  
Continental Breakfast

9:15 - 10:45 Workshops 100 Series

#101 Ethics Part One: What really works in Ethical Decision-Making  
Best Practice Approaches

to Risk Management

#102 Canine Therapy and Other Strategies with Adolescent and Young Adults

#103 Metaphors and Experiential Therapy

#104 How to Get Licensed in Tennessee

11:00 - 12:30 Workshops 200 Series

#201 Ethics Part 2

#202 Soul Salsa: The Power of Humor in Therapy

#203 Eating Disorders: Using What Works in Family Therapy

#204 Screamfree Parenting

**NEW! Network Speed Dating Lunch 12:45 - 1:45**

This is a great opportunity for students to network with potential practicum site representatives, potential employers, and approved supervisors. Students, don't forget to sign up for this!

EXHIBITS: All Morning

STUDENT POSTERS: All Morning

So, with an exciting keynote speaker, great workshops, the new student poster competition, the new networking speed dating lunch, special awards, your organization's Town Meeting, new exhibitors, generous sponsors, door prizes, newly reduced student registrations fees, and a great new venue (Holiday Inn, Airport), the 2010 "What Really Works?" TAMFT Conference has so much to offer. Please join us.

Pictured is Linda being presented with the AAMFT Divisional Contribution Award at the 2009 awards dinner by AAMFT President Linda Schwallie.

From her extensive resume, AAMFT chose the following criteria on which to give her its Divisional Award.

“ Linda Oxford has been a member of AAMFT for over 20 years and has served on various committees of the Tennessee Division for the past ten years. In 2007, she was elected to the position of President-Elect and now serves the Division as President. Linda has led the Division in becoming major partners with the State Department of Education in its new School Violence Project. This project has identified over 30 LMFT providers now on a state list who will help local school districts in the event of school violence. Linda has also contributed significantly to the education and training of MFTs. In 2000, she accepted a position as an Adjunct Faculty Member for the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at Harding University Graduate School of Religion. She also works as a trainer/consultant for the Life Changes Initiative and Workforce Performance Initiative at Agape Child and Family Services, Inc. As an accomplished educator, Linda has presented at the Tennessee Division conferences, the AAMFT Annual Conferences, and many other training events. “

Linda thanks the members of the TAMFT Board for nominating her for this great honor, and expresses delight that she has "had so many opportunities to make meaningful contributions to the organization that has given so very much to me both personally and professionally."

Also, a special thanks to Richard, Celeste, and Linda for contributing to this article.



## Legislative Report

By Richard Gillespie, M.Div.

TAMFT continues to take part in the Children's Mental Health Study to develop a comprehensive system of mental health care for children and their families in Tennessee. Robbie Hutchens has been meeting with this group as our representative through the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.

We also have been asked to take part in a study on Child Protective Services being done by the Select Committee on Children and Youth of the Tennessee legislature. A number of our members have been kind enough to volunteer their services in this regard which we are thankful for. At later meetings we will be called on for testimony about family interventions to help children who have been mistreated. We also are being asked to help with information about the long-term effects of child maltreatment on children and their families.

We are thankful to the members of our association, Legislative Committee members, and board members for their fine effort in 2009 in getting our bill passed to have a state job classification for licensed marriage and family therapists to work in state government. This law has now been implemented as the state Department of Human Resources has written a job classification for LMFT's. State departments will be able to start making use of the classification once the economy improves and the state hiring freeze has been removed.

## TAMFT Financial Report

By Michael A. Runcie

Harry Lauder, a notable Scottish entertainer and author from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was described by Sir Winston Churchill as "Scotland's greatest ever ambassador!" He wrote that "*A bank book makes good reading - better than some novels.*" If you were to read the bank book of the association it would be more likely categorized as a "Short Story" and quite boring!

Boring, however, is not always bad when it comes to the finances of an organization like TAMFT. Our income and expenses have both stayed within budget for 2009. Granted our income is fairly stable with two primary sources: the annual conference fees and quarterly payments from AAMFT members' dues. Expenses are also very stable. Throughout the year we have conference expenses (speaker fees, hotel charges, and printing costs). In addition we have regular payments for our website management, postage, board meeting expenses and salary for our administrative coordinator.

You might want to know that several steps have been taken to protect your financial interests: 1) Four signatures are required for our two bank accounts (this allows three board members and the administrative coordinator to view all transactions at any time). 2) Two signatures are required on all checks and 3) all non-budgeted expenditures are to be approved by the president and president-elect.

Feel free to contact me with any questions regarding TAMFT's financial status. Our association continues to look for other members who would like to serve on the Finance Committee. Please contact me or President Linda Oxford if interested.



## Results of TAMFT Elections in September Report From the TAMFT Elections Committee

In early September, 2009 ballots were mailed to TAMFT members via the US postal service, in accordance with the bylaws. A highly qualified slate of nominees for the 2009 elections was presented to the membership. Much appreciation goes to all six candidates who were nominated and completed the lengthy application process for these elected positions. Congratulations to Cindy Gamble who was elected as East Tennessee Representative to the Board; to Mike Runcie who was elected Treasurer; and to Catherine Robbins who was elected as East Tennessee Representative to the Elections Committee. January 1, 2010 is the beginning of these 3-year terms of office. So look for opportunities to support your elected TAMFT peers as they work on your behalf.

## Updates from East Tennessee

By Ron Schumann, M.A.

Leaves changing, temperature changing and people changing...??? Well, what I mean by 'people changing' is that beginning in January 2010, East Tennessee will welcome Cindy Gamble as our newly elected East Tennessee board member. After serving a 2-year unexpired term and then another 3-year full term, East Tennessee is ready for a change and I'm personally excited to see all that Cindy has in mind. I have had the opportunity to meet with her and here her wonderful ideas and dreams. While I have learned a lot from serving on the board and with so many very talented people, it is also a nice change to have a new face and new ideas. Please extend your welcome and suggestions as we all work together to continue to make TAMFT a wonderful association.

In terms of East Tennessee news, we have met for our networking luncheons over the past few months. The topic of 'ethics' has been presented by attorney Linda High and an informative and enjoyable time has been the result. If you have not already made plans, then consider looking into the future to 2010 for some more positive changes in terms of the Annual Conference. Dr. Scott D. Miller is our keynote speaker and the dates are February 26-27, 2010.

Thanks for a great 5 years while I have had the privilege of serving on the board and let's keep working together to make positive changes.



## From the Student Associate Member Representative

By Amy Frew

First of all, thank you to those of you who responded to the survey email I sent out recently. Your responses were very helpful for me and the Board to understand the needs and challenges currently being faced by our membership group and get a plan together for TAMFT to be a greater resource. Overall, people stated that the biggest challenges they faced gaining licensure status involved getting client hours and understanding the process. Many individuals stated that they were working in private practice, with a few in an agency setting. Of the members of our group, few stated that they consistently attended networking meetings; those that didn't said it was usually because of schedule or not knowing about the meeting. Some members felt highly involved, while others wished for more connection to the organization, most stating that there was a need for additional communication (email or bulletins) sharing about involvement opportunities and issues MFTs are facing, clinically and through legislation.

Hopefully, this summary of responses captures some of your experiences with TAMFT, because we are going to be working towards you experiencing a greater benefit with your membership. And the first way is this - attend the annual conference in February. New this year is a "Networking Speed Dating Lunch" with specific opportunities to connect about supervision, jobs and practicum sites. We will also be putting more links specific to licensure questions on the website and increasing the communication so that you always know about networking meetings and opportunities to be involved.

I appreciate those of you who took time to respond to my questions...so that I and TAMFT can serve you better. I look forward to more feedback and seeing you in February at the conference.

## Report on the Tennessee Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Marital and Family Therapists, and Licensed Clinical Pastoral Therapists

Robbie Hutchens represented TAMFT at the meeting of the Tennessee Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Marital and Family Therapists, and Licensed Clinical Pastoral Therapists on Friday, November 13. No official decisions were made in regard to the most recent proposed rule changes for LMFT licensees, but a new written jurisprudence exam for MFTs was reviewed and approved by the Board. This written exam will replace the oral examinations of the past, streamlining the licensing process for LMFTs. Multiple amendments to licensing requirements for professional counselors were discussed at length, the bulk of which raised expectations and strengthened training for those seeking the LPC licensure. A new oral exam was approved for Licensed Pastoral Therapists.

Mandated reporting of ethical violations of licensed therapists is one of the more important rule changes the Board is taking under consideration. Robbie expressed concerns about legal protection for "reporting therapists" and anonymity for clients whose therapists would necessarily undergo an investigation for potential ethical misconduct. The legal counsel at the meeting noted to his knowledge, there would be no guarantee of immunity from a civil suit, but that he would research this matter further. Robbie also inquired about the Board's intent to require mandatory domestic violence training for all licensees. This matter was tabled for future discussion, but was validated as being a matter of importance.

The Board requested that our association commit to investigate how other states have successfully addressed the concerns we expressed. They asked that we present our findings and recommendations, including any prescriptive language, to the Board at the next meeting. In addition, it suggested that we communicate with AAMFT to clarify directives to report unethical behavior of colleagues to the AAMFT Ethics Committee. The next meeting was scheduled for February of 2010.

### West Tennessee Luncheon Meetings

First Monday, 11:45-1:00 in the hospitality room at Harding University Graduate School of Religion, 1000 Cherry Road, Memphis. The hospitality room is located in the W.B. West Building (the education building). This group does not meet in summer and around holidays so check with Keith Fussell before the meetings to confirm. [kfussell@sycamoreview.org](mailto:kfussell@sycamoreview.org) or 901-372-1874.

### Middle Tennessee Luncheon Meetings

Fourth Friday of every other month, 11:00am-1:00pm. TAMFT will certify the meeting for one hour of continuing education. Lipscomb University: Counseling Center, Elam Hall, Lower Level Address: One University Park Dr. Nashville, TN 37204. The counseling center is located in the basement of Elam Hall. Please email [paul.cates@lipscomb.edu](mailto:paul.cates@lipscomb.edu) or call 615-966-1781 to attend so Lipscomb can plan for the meal.

### Knoxville Area Luncheon Meetings

For more information, contact: Ron Schumann TAMFT East Tennessee Representative: 4032 Sutherland Ave. Knoxville, TN 37919 [ronlmft@comcast.net](mailto:ronlmft@comcast.net) Tel: 865/584-4435

### Advertisement Opportunity

Opportunities to advertise in this quarterly newsletter are now available. You can submit training events, job opportunities or other announcements in our newsletter. The advertisements must be consistent with AAMFT's and TAMFT's mission. The price for advertising in our association newsletter shall be as follows:

Non-Members or Agencies: 1 page \$250.00, ½ page \$150.00, ¼ page \$100.00

**Members of TAMFT they will receive a discount of half off.**

For more information contact the Administrative Coordinator at [admincoord@tnamft.org](mailto:admincoord@tnamft.org)