

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Gerald and Carmen Zuk: Family Therapy and Child Psychiatry



TGN: Tell us about your educational and early career backgrounds.

Gerald: I received my doctorate in psychology from the University of Chicago. From 1961 to 1980 I was associate director of the Department of Psychiatry at the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute in Philadelphia where I founded the training program and became a specialist in family therapy. I formed the first family therapy conference in the U.S. during that time. I became editor of the International Journal of Family Therapy, which continues in print today under my successors. I also embarked on writing books on family therapy. I now have four or five books published.

Carmen: I received my medical degree from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and for several years maintained a private practice in Argentina. I came to the United States in 1971 for specialized training in child psychiatry at the Medical College of Pennsylvania. I became a Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. I founded and directed the first child psychiatry unit at the Medical College of Georgia. Then I worked as a psychiatrist at the New Orleans Adolescent Hospital for 3 years. We moved to California where I worked as a psychiatrist at Kaiser Hospital in Los Angeles.

TGN: Gerald, tell us about your life after Philadelphia.

Gerald: I taught in Holland, Argentina, Mexico, Canada, and Israel. I also practiced in Southern California at the Pacific State Hospital in Pomona. We lived in the northern part of Los Angeles County (the "Canyon Country"). After that I had my office in Goleta, Santa Barbara area. In 2010, I suffered a stroke which has left me paralyzed on the left side, so I have been in a wheelchair because of that. In 2011, we moved to Menlo Commons to be close to our two daughters - Cary and Gabby, and our 5 year old grandson, Joshua Matthew. Our daughter Cary is a lawyer with the Homeland Security Department in San Francisco, and our other daughter Gabby is a school teacher and also lives in San Francisco.

TGN: What do you think about Menlo Commons?

Carmen: We like it here - nice grounds, nice people, nice area to live in.

Gerald: I realize that there are residents here with a high level of education. Some distinguished people. I am impressed with them. We also can get together at least once a week with our family who live nearby.

TGN: What activities do you enjoy?

Gerald: We watch a lot of TV, and do a lot of reading. I notice that aging is a tremendous problem in our country as people are living longer and experiencing the ailments of old age. I am 86 now, so I spend time being together with our daughters and our grandson.

Carmen: I spend my time cooking, and taking care of Gerald. I live a very simple life.

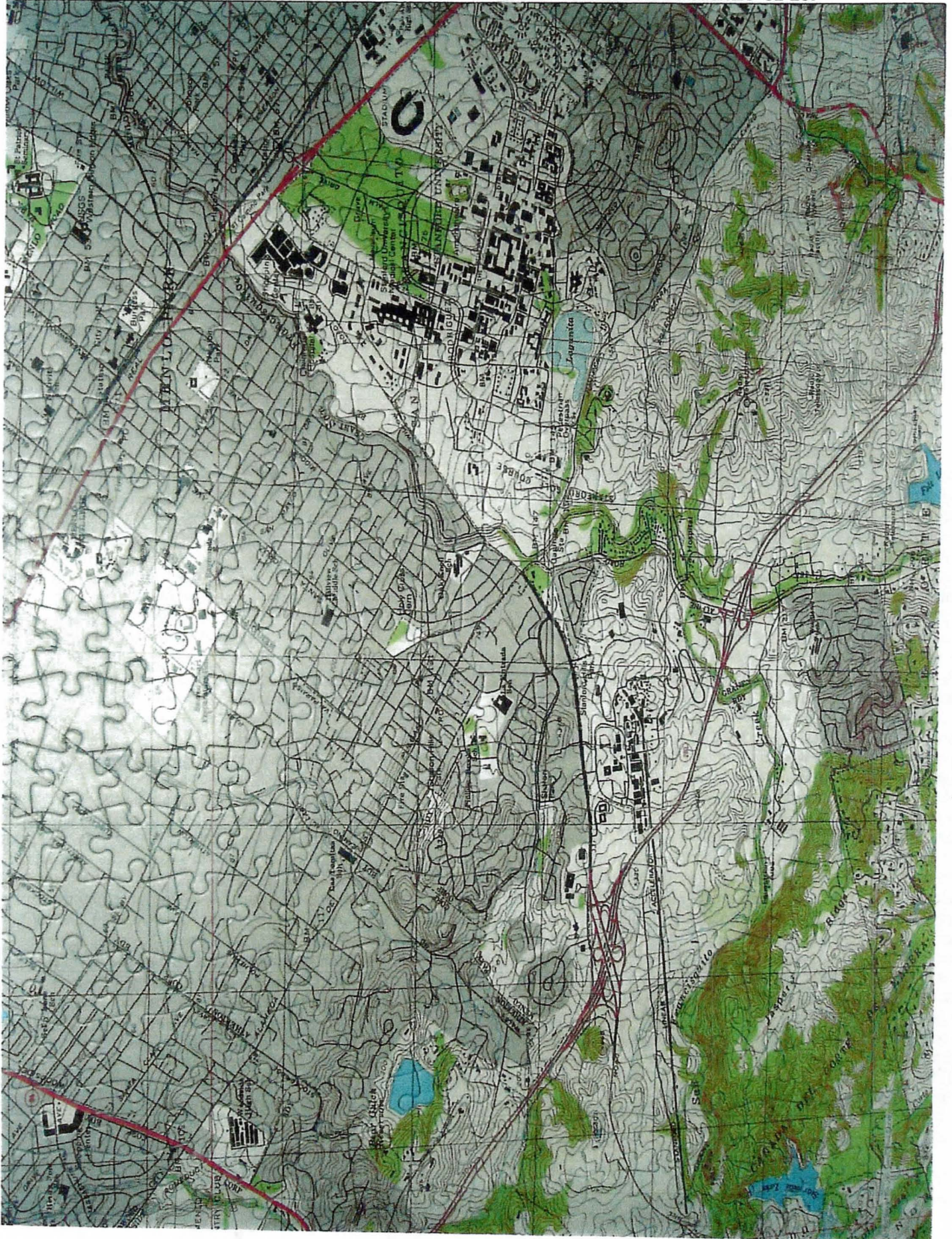
TGN: Tell us more about your writings, Gerald.

Gerald: I have spread out some of my books on the table here, and as you can see they cover various topics dealing with psychology. The book written in 2005 by myself and Carmen is entitled "The Psychology of Delusion". We contend in the book that delusion is a form of intelligence that erupts when the individual is overwhelmed by the uncertainties of life and cannot find an exact cause. While often harmless, it can lead to chaos, disorganization and conduct dangerous to self and/or others. The individual enters into a state called delusional disorder, the most common of which is the persecutory type, where the individual believes that he or she is being persecuted by others, and must take protective action. The situation is worsened when the individual discovers that no one confirms his belief. Delusional disorder now takes over with a vengeance. At this point the individual enters fully into a stage of "negation" by which is meant that he transfers his torment to those he believes have been torturing him. The transfer seems to accomplish a miracle. Lo and behold: As if by magic the individual is freed from personal torment. Whereas before he hated himself and his tormentors, now he no longer accepts personal responsibility; only his tormentors are at fault. It is a marvelous accomplishment, this process, were it not for the fact that the result - at least from the point of view of an interested observer - is catastrophic, because the profound symptoms of delusional disorder appear as a means to reinforce unconsciousness.

TGN: Wow. Thanks for sharing your description with us of that!



It's a Jigsaw Puzzle - Menlo Commons Is In the Middle of It!



It took me most of 5 days to put it together. Look closely to find Menlo Commons. - Jim Palmer