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See also CARSON, RACHEL; RADICAL FAERIES; WITTMAN, CARL.

ERICKSON EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Erickson Educational Foundation (EEF) was a non-profit educational and philanthropic organization incorporated in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1964. The EEF was founded and funded by a wealthy female-to-male transsexual businessman, Reed Erickson, who held the sole voting membership. The EEF was active from 1964 to 1977, during which time it had offices in Baton Rouge and New York City. In 1977 Erickson retired the EEF and moved with his family to Mexico. The EEF picked up again from 1981 to 1984, then operating out of Erickson's home in Ojai, California. At various times the EEF also had mailing addresses in Mexico; Panama; El Paso, Texas; Los Angeles; and Phoenix, Arizona. The work of the EEF was done by Erickson, an executive director and a bookkeeper. The EEF ceased operations in 1984 due to the ill health of its founder, guiding light, and sole benefactor.

An early EEF brochure described the organization's goals as being to provide support in areas where human potential was limited by adverse conditions, or where the scope of research was too new or unconventional to receive support from mainstream sources. During its life, the EEF contributed both active leadership and millions of dollars of behind-the-scenes financial support to the early development of LGBT movements.

The Erickson Educational Foundation and ONE

Shortly after the EEF's incorporation Reed Erickson, representing the foundation, contacted the offices of the Los Angeles homophile organization ONE, Inc., in response to a fund-raising mail campaign. A series of meetings and the phone calls between Erickson and W. Dorr Legg of ONE resulted in Erickson proposing and offering to finance the formation of the legally independent, nonpolitical, non-profit, and tax-exempt Institute for the Study of Human

Resources (ISHR), which would enable Erickson and others to make tax-deductible donations to the educational work of ONE, Inc. The original acting directors of ISHR were Dorr Legg, Tony Reyes, and Don Slater, all three of whom had been among the founders of ONE. Erickson was named president and remained in the post until 1977, when the EEF temporarily suspended operations. According to its articles of incorporation, ISHR's purpose was to promote and encourage the study of male and female homosexuality and other types of human behavior. The EEF directly funded ISHR for fifteen years (1964–1976, 1980–1983), during which time between 70 and 80 percent of the ISHR's operating budget came from the EEF. In total, the ISHR recorded having received over \$200,000 in direct grants from the EEF, aside from transfers of funds not recorded in surviving official documents but recalled by others. Although there were other donors to the ISHR and to ONE, it would not be an exaggeration to say that without the EEF's support many of ONE's activities, and perhaps even ONE itself, would not have been possible on the scale achieved with the benefit of the EEF's support.

The ISHR's educational programs, supported by the EEF and delivered through ONE, included nondegree courses, lectures, courses given offsite in cities beyond Los Angeles (where ONE had no offices), and the first graduate degrees in homophile studies ever granted in the United States. (In 1964 Deborah Coates received an M.A. degree and Michael Lombardi obtained a doctor of philosophy degree; in 1965 Paul Hardman obtained a doctor of philosophy degree.) Some of those whose work was supported by the ISHR and ONE included Vern L. Bullough, researcher and author of numerous texts on LGBT themes; Antony Grey, a key figure in promoting the liberal reforms urged by Britain's Wolfenden Report of 1957; Evelyn Hooker, author of the revolutionary 1957 research study *The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual*; Laud Humphreys, author of *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* (1975); Christopher Isherwood, widely acclaimed author; Christine Jorgensen, celebrated transsexual activist; and Virginia Prince, widely reputed to be the founder of transgender activism.

The EEF's contributions to the ISHR also supported the development of the Blanche M. Baker Memorial Library, which became one of the backbones of ONE Institute and Archives. The EEF also supported the research and publication of *An Annotated Bibliography of Homosexuality* (1976) and three other important books on human sexuality by Vern L. Bullough.

The EEF's single largest contribution to ONE was the 1983 \$1.9 million purchase of two elegant mansions and numerous other buildings on a 3.5-acre downtown Los

Angeles property known as the Milbank Estate. Sadly, no sooner had the ink dried on the contract for the purchase when the relationship between the EEF and ONE began to unravel. Almost ten years of legal battles over ownership of the property left ONE facing possible ruin and effectively paralyzed most of the public operations of ONE. In 1992 the property was divided between Erickson's heirs and the ISHR, whose share was assessed at over \$1 million. By 1997 the ISHR's part of the property had been sold and ONE's activities were largely transferred to locations owned by the University of Southern California.

Support for Transgender Rights

When the EEF was created in 1964, transsexualism was little known to either professionals or the public. (The term transgender had not yet been coined by Virginia Prince.) One of the main functions of the EEF was to bring attention to this phenomena. Central to this work was Zelda Roth Suplee, EEF's executive director from 1967 to 1977, who was the public face of the organization during its most active years of operation.

The EEF supported in one way or another a large portion of the work done during the 1960s and 1970s by, for, and about transgender people in the United States. The EEF published an informative quarterly newsletter, produced an invaluable set of educational pamphlets, and developed and maintained an extensive referral list of service providers. The EEF funded many important beginning research efforts and was instrumental in organizing all of the earliest international conferences on transsexualism as well as bringing discussions about transsexualism to conferences of broader interest. The EEF sponsored innumerable educational public addresses on the topic of transsexualism for medical professionals, clergy, law enforcement officers, and university and college students. The EEF also sponsored educational films, radio and television appearances, and newspaper articles.

The importance of the EEF's quarterly newsletter (with a mailing list of 20,000), referral service, and pamphlet series would be hard to overemphasize. They were lifelines for transgender people for decades. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the only other literature available was a handful of not overly sympathetic and very hard-to-access professional publications. Most mental-health professionals and physicians considered transsexualism a perversion. Television talk-show appearances and documentaries were virtually nonexistent. The few organizations that did exist were mostly small, local, and clandestine. There was no Internet or email. The EEF served as *the* only national clearinghouse and informa-

tion source for transgender people, who wrote to the EEF from all over the United States asking for information about their feelings and for the names of doctors to whom they could turn for help.

The EEF responded to the needs of the transgender community by compiling a national referral list of psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, and surgeons willing to help transgender people. The foundation maintained a hotline and welcomed people who visited the EEF offices. Between 1969 and 1974 the EEF produced a series of nine pamphlets that addressed various aspects of transsexualism in plain language. These pamphlets were reprinted and cherished well into the 1980s.

The EEF also donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the support of key researchers studying transsexualism. The roster of the people who benefited from research grants from the EEF reads like a Who's Who of early transgender research. Among them were Harry Benjamin, Harold Christensen, Milton Edgerton, Anke Ehrhardt, Deborah Feinbloom, Norman Fisk, Roger Gorski, Richard Green, Donald Laub, Jon K. Meyer, John Money, Ira Pauly, Richard Pillard, June Reinisch, and Paul Walker.

In particular, the EEF supported the work of the father of transgender research, Harry Benjamin, through the Harry Benjamin Foundation, which enabled a group of physicians and researchers to convene at Benjamin's New York City offices during the mid-1960s. The conversations that took place at those meetings served as a birthing ground for the landmark books *Transsexualism and Sex Reassignment* (1969), edited by Money and Green, and *Man and Woman, Boy and Girl* (1972), edited by Money and Ehrhardt. The first university-based gender clinic in the United States, the Johns Hopkins Gender Identity Clinic (1965–1979), was conceived at those meetings and was partially funded by the EEF from 1967 to 1973.

Another invaluable contribution to transgender interests made by the EEF was the convening of the first (London, 1969), second (Elsinore, Denmark, 1971), and third (Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, 1973) International Symposia on Gender Identity, the first held solely to discuss transgender issues. A fourth symposium (Stanford University, 1975) was named for Harry Benjamin in honor of his ninetieth birthday. At the fifth symposium (Norfolk, Virginia, 1977), an urgent last-minute addition appeared at the front of the program announcing the demise of the EEF and calling for a special meeting to "brainstorm" about what to do to address the loss of "a vital force in the area of transsexualism" which "has been

of inestimable value to the field” (Reed Erickson and the Erickson Educational Foundation at <http://web.uvic.ca/~123>). It was at this meeting, called in direct response to the chasm left in the field of transsexualism by the withdrawal of the support of the EEF, that the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association was created. Erickson was made an honorary member.

Another of the EEF’s major undertakings consisted of extensive public education and outreach that explained transsexualism to the public. The EEF had a cadre of dedicated speakers who visited colleges and universities, theological institutes, medical schools, nursing colleges, police academies, academic conferences, and government agencies. The EEF was featured on radio and television and in major print media such as *Look* magazine and *Dear Abby*, and produced educational films that were widely distributed and which literally defined the field by providing definitions of transsexualism and transvestism to 105 dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Other Work

The EEF also provided assistance for investigations into parapsychology, religious experience, psychoenergetics, nondrug-induced altered states of consciousness, homeopathy, acupuncture, and nonmedical healing. Some of the projects that benefited from the EEF’s largesse were Jean Houston’s and Robert E. L. Masters’s joint work on altered states of consciousness, Stanley Krippner’s dream studies, John Lilly’s research into dolphin–human communication, and the publication of the first edition of *A Course in Miracles* (1976).

The Work Continues

In 1976 the EEF passed on many of its files to the Janus Information Facility under the direction of Dr. Paul Walker, who was director of the Gender Clinic of the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas. In 1986 the Janus Information Facility, in turn, passed on the EEF legacy to the care of J2CP Information Services under the direction of Joanna Clark (Sister Mary Elizabeth) and Jude Patton. In 1990, J2CP turned over the EEF files remaining in its possession to the American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS) under the direction of Dallas Denny. In 2000 AEGIS joined forces with others to form a new organization, Gender Education and Advocacy (GEA), which carries forward the work begun in 1964 by the EEF.

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See also BENJAMIN, HARRY; ERICKSON, REED; HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT; HOOKER, EVELYN; INTERSEXUALS AND INTERSEXED PEOPLE; ISHERWOOD, CHRISTOPHER; JORGENSON, CHRISTINE; MONEY, JOHN, AND ANKE EHRHARDT; ONE INSTITUTE; PRINCE, VIRGINIA; TRANSGENDER ORGANIZATIONS AND PERIODICALS; TRANSSEXUALS, TRANSVESTITES, TRANSGENDER PEOPLE, AND CROSS-DRESSERS.

ERICKSON, Reed (b. 13 October 1917; d. 3 January 1992), activist, philanthropist.

Reed Erickson, born Rita Alma Erickson, was a wealthy female-to-male transsexual man who helped create the medical, legal, and social support system through which transsexual people in the United States have addressed their unique needs from the 1960s forward. He was also a major financial contributor to the ONE Institute for Homophile Studies and to several nonmainstream causes such as research into interspecies communication, mental telepathy, hypnotic trances, and psychoactive botanical substances.

Born in El Paso, Texas, to a successful, geographically mobile, Jewish-German family of industrial entrepreneurs, Erickson grew up in Philadelphia and briefly attended Temple University. In the late 1930s the family relocated to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where Erickson’s father had transferred his lead-smelting business. Erickson completed his education at Louisiana State University, where he became the first female graduate of its school of mechanical engineering. He had a minor involvement in leftist politics in the later 1940s, reputedly