

Media Release

October 21, 2015

**McKendy Memorial Lecture on Narrative
“Meaning, Recovery and Psychosis: A Role for Narrative in Psychiatry”
by Philip Thomas
Monday, October 26 at 7 pm**

Writer and psychiatrist Philip Thomas will deliver the John McKendy Memorial Lecture on Narrative when he speaks on “Meaning, Recovery and Psychosis: A Role for Narrative in Psychiatry.” The lecture takes place Monday, October 26 at 7 PM in Brian Mulroney Hall, Room 101 at St. Thomas University.

For much of his career, Thomas has worked closely with survivors, service users, carers and communities in developing systems of help that foster mutual support and do not rely primarily on medication.

He was involved with setting up Sharing Voices, a community development project that works with Bradford's diverse communities. He was also a trustee of the Soteria Network UK, a charity that fosters the development of approaches that focus on the importance of meaning and understanding the experiences of psychosis, with minimal use of medication.

Thomas believes that in the long-standing debate as to whether medicine is science or art, the pendulum appears to have swung so far in the direction of the latter, that the former has, in the words of Arthur Kleinman, become “...a pale shadow, a fragile remnant of what had for centuries been crucial to the work of the doctor.”

In the lecture, Thomas suggests that narrative psychiatry offers a way forward. It foregrounds the patient's story and considers the consequences of different interpretations of the patient's story by the doctor. He will define narrative and outline justifications for thinking about psychiatric practice as narrative.

Thomas worked as a consultant psychiatrist in the National Health Service for over twenty years before leaving clinical practice in 2004 to become a writer. He was a founder member of the Critical Psychiatry Network, and was its co-chair for over ten years. He held academic posts in the University of Edinburgh, University of Wales College of Medicine, University of Bradford and the University of Central Lancashire.

The lecture is sponsored by the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Narrative.

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