
Marshall Henry Klaus was a scientist and pediatrician who studied maternal-infant bonding in the twentieth century in the United States. Maternal-infant bonding is the psychological and chemical attachment between mother and infant. Klaus cofounded DONA International, an organization [5] that trains birthing aides, called doulas, to provide physical and emotional support to laboring mothers. He also studied the differences between the layouts and quality of care provided in nurses’ and birthing centers in different countries and compared them to those found in the United States. Klaus’s study influenced national and international initiatives to create hospital policies focused on promoting early bonding between mother and infant. Klaus catalyzed the advent of doula and international policies that emphasized interaction between mother and infant.

Klaus was born on 6 July 1927 to Caroline Epstein Klaus and Max Henry Klaus in Lakewood, Ohio. His mother was a teacher and his father was a physician. Klaus had one younger brother. Carl, who was born in 1932. The family lived near Cleveland, Ohio, where Klaus attended elementary school until his father’s death in 1934. Shortly following his father’s death, Klaus’s mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Klaus claimed in an interview that certain events in his childhood were important for his future career. One such event took place shortly after his mother’s cancer diagnosis, when she was being treated with radium. As a result of the radium ray treatments, the skin on his hands burned. This is one of the reasons why Klaus and Kennell developed artificial surfactant to treat neonatal lung disease.

In 1970, Klaus published “Neonatal Separation: The Maternal Side of Interactional Deprivation,” which initiated his formal research into maternal-infant bonding. In that article, Klaus detailed a collaboration with John Kennell of the University of California, San Francisco in San Francisco, California. At the same time, he also worked as the director of academic affairs at Children’s Hospital of Oakland in Oakland, California. Later in his career, Klaus collaborated on maternal-infant bonding studies for the rest of Klaus’s career and, in 1985, they published a book titled, Your Amazing Newborn.

In 1992, along with his wife and Kennell, Klaus cofounded DONA International, which was then called Doulas of North America. DONA International is an organization that trains birthing aides, called doulas, to provide physical and emotional support to laboring mothers. Globally, the initiative reduced the number of cases of infant abandonment. During this time, Klaus and Kennell were part of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. That initiative recognized hospitals and birthing centers that focused on infant feeding and maternal-infant bonding as a Baby-Friendly Hospital, in large part due to Klaus’s research in maternal-infant bonding. Klaus had also founded DONA International, which was then called Doulas of North America, DONA International is an organization that trains women to become certified doulas, and theorganization [6] places a large emphasis on maternal-infant bonding and breastfeeding.

Klaus continued to deliver lectures on maternal-infant bonding across the United States throughout the early 2000s. On 15 August 2017, Klaus died in San Francisco, California.

By: Darby, Alexa Keywords: Marshall Klaus [4], Emotional Support [7], Maternal-Infant bonding [4], Labor and delivery [1]

Sources

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Subject
- DONA International
- Mother and infant
- Mother-Infant Interaction
- Doulas
- Labor
- Obstetrics

Topic
People

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