

## **Remembering Sylvia Onesti Richardson, MD**

“Flunking penalizes children for the failure of school systems to develop effective instructional plans for children who need more and better instruction if they are to succeed. More of the same just does not work.”

Who better to make this statement, than one of the giants in our field, Sylvia O. Richardson, MD, Past president of the Orton Dyslexia Society, (now the International Dyslexia Association), Past President of the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA), Chair of the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics and Distinguished Professor of Communication at the University of South Florida, in Tampa. Honorary Fellow of the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators.

Sylvia spent her career with a hand in every dimension of the language spectrum, bringing together the disciplines of neuro-science and medical research with the best practices in education. Drawing on her experiences as a Montessori teacher, she championed the movement to establish diagnostic preschools and wrote, “Montessori principles and practices pertain specifically to the direct and indirect preparation of the child for writing and reading”.

In a world all too often flooded with mediocrity, Sylvia was a giant among giants. She listened, and reached out to parents and children to find out where they were, and then she would meet them there. She spoke, as Margaret Byrd Rawson said, “in plain English.” No airs, no pretensions, Sylvia was the real deal. The world is better for it, and we are blessed and honored to have known her.