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AIFS Research Manager.

Four new studies envisaged in the Institute's Research Plan (*Family Matters*, no.41, Winter 1995) are now well underway, and data for each are currently being collected through a series of questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews.

AUSTRALIAN FAMILY LIFE COURSE STUDY: STAGE ONE

The study focuses on family wellbeing for a range of family types at major family transition points within the life course. It has the broad aim of achieving a better understanding of major demographic and economic changes over the last 30 years and their implications for family wellbeing and stability for families in varying family circumstances and at different points of the life course.

Using the Institute's Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility, Stage One of the study will collect information from a national random telephone survey of 2000 households. Respondents are aged between 25–50 years plus those under 25 years of age who are parents with primary responsibility for a child.

Data for this study are being collected at the same time as the data for two other Institute studies – *Housing across the Life Course* and *Later Life Families*. As well as being a significant study in its own right, Stage One of the *Australian Family Life Course* study will also provide the basis for evaluating the feasibility of a broader life course study envisaged in the Institute's research plan.

The *Australian Family Life Course* study is broad-based, and will provide a large data set able to be used for diverse purposes. The following are some of the main research issues being addressed: employment patterns across the life course in relation to family formation and dissolution, and caring responsibilities; pathways to family formation, dissolution and re-formation; family relationships; marital breakdown; caring for family members; intergenerational links and transfers; and use of services.

LATER LIFE FAMILIES STUDY

The *Later Life Families* study is a new core research project that focuses on extending our understanding of families where there is an adult member aged 50–70 years. It is

linked closely to the *Australian Family Life Course* study.

Increased understanding of later life families will enable comment to be made on how this family life stage and age group anticipate and make decisions about future living and care arrangements that affect a number of policy directions around employment and income support options, health care and the availability and delivery of a range of community resources. Between the ages 50–70 participation in paid employment will have ended for many family members, or retirement contemplated in the near future. Increasing numbers of later life family members, parents and children, will have experienced divorce, lone parenthood or living in a de facto relationship. These changes in family structure are likely to affect later life family interchanges.

The major aims of the study are: to extend the understanding of the importance and role of family relationships in present life and future expectations/planning of later life families; to examine current involvement, attitudes, values and expectations associated with intergenerational care and support; and to explore family relationship dynamics/interactions and their impact on actual or anticipated use of a range of community resources and income support options



OBITUARY

EVELYN GREENBLAT (nee Fisher)

Born Glasgow, Scotland, 4 August 1946

Died Melbourne, 13 June 1996, aged 49

From August 1990 until January 1996 when she retired on grounds of ill health, Evelyn Greenblat was a valued member of the research staff of the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Evelyn's career in social research spanned a total of 27 years, the major part of which was spent at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne where, between 1969 and 1985, she had responsibility for a longitudinal study of the relationships between socio-economic background and tertiary level students' academic performance.

At the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Evelyn worked initially with Dr Gay Ochiltree on the Institute's study of early childhood. Her work resulted in two significant monographs in the Institute's *Early Childhood Study* series, both co-authored with Ochiltree; Evelyn was senior author of

The use and choice of child care, published in 1993. During her career at the Institute Evelyn also contributed to the *Australian Living Standards Study*, the *Australian Family Formation Project*, and the *Work and Family Life Project*; these contributions, along with her collaboration with Ochiltree, are reflected in Evelyn's co-authorship of several papers published in *Family Matters* in recent years.

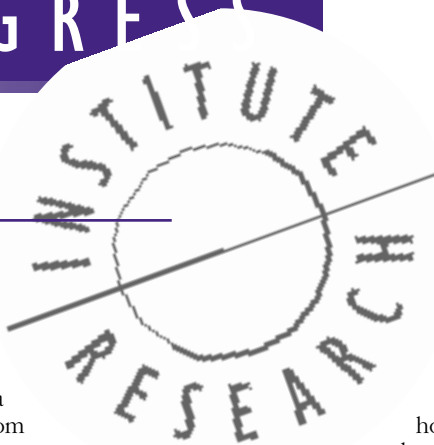
Evelyn Greenblat grew up and was educated in Scotland. I first met her at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow where we were both psychology undergraduates in the late 1960s. I came to know and respect her as an earnest, able student with a profound respect for knowledge, a desire for understanding and a commitment to excellence in her work, traits which were amply evident throughout her later career. But she was also possessed of a delightful sense of

fun and a contagious zest for living. Student life – outside of class – was rarely dull when Evelyn was present.

Evelyn was one of the brightest students in her year and graduated in 1967 with a good degree in psychology and sociology. Shortly afterwards she emigrated to this country with her Australian husband Hymie Greenblat. They had met when Hymie visited Glasgow while Evelyn was still an undergraduate. It was to be love at first sight! Accordingly, Hymie's stay turned out to be longer than he originally intended, his return to Australia being postponed until Evelyn's graduation and their subsequent marriage.

It was a matter of great personal delight to me, on being appointed Director of the Institute early in 1994, to discover that my fellow student and friend of undergraduate days was a member of my new staff! I had met Evelyn only once previously during the intervening years, on a visit to Melbourne in 1978. Though a little more mature in years, outwardly Evelyn had changed but little. The same commitment to high standards in her work was much in evidence; also, not far beneath was the same twinkling spirit of old.

Over the later years of her life Evelyn experienced much ill health and in November 1994 was diagnosed as suffering



for later life families.

The data are being collected from a national random telephone survey of approximately 700 households using the Institute's CATI facility. A common core of questions will be shared between this study and the *Australian Family Life Course* study, thus enabling some comparisons between the wellbeing of later life families and those at earlier stages of the life course.

HOUSING ACROSS THE FAMILY LIFE COURSE

This project investigates how family life course and housing career events interrelate. The first task is to establish the nature of contemporary family life courses and housing careers, and to examine the extent to which these have changed over time – a significant strength of the life course approach. Analysis will then focus on housing moves in terms of tenure and/or location, the reasons for such

moves, and the nature of their relationship to different phases of the family life course. The housing circumstances of those who have made housing adjustments in relation to changing family form will then be compared with those who have not made such adjustments and related to differences in family wellbeing.

The data for this study will be collected at the same time as the *Australian Family Life Course* study and the *Later Life Families* study which, combined, will provide a sample of 2,700.

PARENTING-21: PARENTING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Parenting-21 explores how Australian parents from a variety of cultural backgrounds pass on their values to their children, focusing particularly on child rearing practices and attitudes and how these relate to cultural beliefs about the nature of childhood. The study is designed: to provide a detailed picture of how ordinary Australian families are raising their children and preparing them for life into the next century; to compare the influence of various cultural backgrounds when raising children; and to contribute to discussions regarding the development of support services for families with young children. *Parenting-21* is linked to an international consortium of research teams carrying out similar projects in Holland, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United States.

There are two components to the study. In the first component more than 500 families from all around Australia are providing information about their child rearing practices by means of completing a series of brief questionnaires. Families are included in this component if they have a child between the age of five months and eight and a half years.

In the second component of *Parenting-21*, participants, in addition to completing the above questionnaires, also take part in a face-to-face interview in which child rearing values and practices are explored in more detail. The sample for this second component comprises five groups of Australian families from Aboriginal, Anglo, Italian, Polish, and Vietnamese communities in Melbourne. Each of the cultural groups is made up of 60 families who have a child in one of five target age groups (six months, 18 months, three years, four and a half years, and seven to eight years).

from cancer of the liver. On learning of the diagnosis Evelyn determined to put up the best possible fight for life that she could. In the course of her struggle, she drew upon enormous resources of inner courage and strength and, with Hymie's support, endured more than a year of an almost constant succession of unpleasant and debilitating surgical and chemical interventions.

During periods of remission from symptoms Evelyn returned to her work at the Institute. There, her quiet courage and demeanour, her commitment to getting on with her life and with her job drew the admiration of her colleagues. She was a model for all of us of how to behave in adversity.

Evelyn never lost her sense of optimism, evident still in the speech she made at the farewell lunch in her honour held at the Institute a few months ago. That was a delightful occasion of which we all have fond memories.

Evelyn Greenblat died peacefully late on the evening of Thursday 13 June 1996 with her husband Hymie at her side. Courageous to the end, she will be sadly missed by her colleagues at the Institute.

Harry McGurk



Longitudinal Data on Children

Longitudinal studies on families are seen as a valuable way to understand the processes of family support for children, and have been used in various countries to provide a better understanding of the phases and durations of family experience. Most recently, Canada has commenced a longitudinal study of children to form the basis of a better understanding of family change and associated policy responses.

In Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has been considering the issue of longitudinal data. They have recently embarked on a longitudinal Survey of Employment and Unemployment Patterns (SEUP), but their family analysis currently focuses on cross-sectional data. At this time, there are no plans to develop a longitudinal survey for children.

Two recurring themes at the recent Australian Rotary Health Research Fund Symposium on Health and Family were the need to analyse children's characteristics in a wider framework and the need to explore the experiences of children over time. The ABS presented a paper there in which they raised issues about user requirements for data on children.

Longitudinal studies, though, require considerable resourcing and particular care in analysis, and any agency considering undertaking such a commitment needs to look at the benefits and disadvantages. A longitudinal study does have the ability to address issues such as: How many children spend time in a one-parent family, how long do those experiences last and how much of that period is linked with poverty? How well do such experiences link with educational outcomes? How closely is poverty linked with family break-up as compared with long term unemployment of parents? How do families with a child with a disability or a health problem fare over the long haul? But as the issues shift over time, some of the questions asked lose their relevance and the dilemma about the advantages of longitudinal versus more immediate cross-sectional data is highlighted.

For this reason, the Australian Bureau of Statistics is interested to hear from people who have a need for longitudinal data on children.

Contact Andrea Knott on (06) 252 7070, or write to The Australian Bureau of Statistics, PO Box 10, Belconnen ACT 2616.