

# *Jay Herman Mahler*

## **In Memoriam**

**Whereas, Jay Herman Mahler** was born in Alameda County, on July 26, 1946 and raised in Hayward, California; and

**Whereas, Jay** survived several years of involuntary mental health treatment including electroshock treatment in his ten years in Alameda County's mental health system, finding his voice and sharing his lived experience as he became an activist and pioneer in the mental health consumer, survivor, ex-patient movement since 1972; and

**Whereas, Jay** joined the Eden District Mental Health Committee from 1972-1980, chaired by the late Alameda County Board Supervisor, Gail Steele; and

**Whereas, from 1975-1980 and 1998-2002 Jay** served on the Alameda County Mental Health Board; and

**Whereas, in 1976 Jay** formed an organization called the Mental Health Consumer Concerns, which was the state's first peer run organization with a contract for patient's rights; and

**Whereas, Jay** had a vision for psychiatric survivors working as patient advocates, representing people and assisting them in resolving complaints about hospital treatment and conditions; and

**Whereas, Jay** heightened the awareness of the ex-patient advocates about what life was like for people involuntarily hospitalized, and empathy for the circumstances that led to the person's confinement; and

**Whereas, Jay** from 1977-1980 was one of the first four consultants to the National Institute for Mental Health; and

**Whereas, Jay** was appointed by Governor Brown to the California Planning Council on Mental Health from 1979-1985 and to the Citizens Advisory Council between 1979-1984 and initiated in 1982 the Year of the Consumer; and

**Whereas, Jay** in 1983 was one of the founders of the California Network of Mental Health Clients. At its first organizing meeting it established a Self-Help Task Force to encourage, support and assist in the formation and in the development of self-help groups throughout California, and

**Whereas, Jay** was appointed by Lieutenant Governor McCarthy in 1987 to the Taskforce of Mental Illness where the full service partnership was developed; and

**Whereas, Jay** served as Chair of the Board of the California Institute for Mental Health from 2002-2009; and

**Whereas, Jay** was hired in 2006 as the first Consumer Relations Manager for Alameda County Behavioral Health and soon thereafter founded the Pool of Consumer Champions and started a statewide Spirituality Initiative in collaboration with the California Institute of Mental Health; and

**Whereas, Jay** retired in 2012 to spend more time with his wife, Susan Mahler, and their family while staying active about key mental health issues such as mental health stigma reduction, the hiring of peer support specialists in all aspects of mental health, especially crisis response teams and helping reduce incarceration of people with mental health challenges; and

**Whereas, Jay** lived an impactful life, passing away at the age of 74 years old, on Saturday, May 15, 2021 as he joined the ancestor's realm; and

**Whereas, Jay's** legacy will continue as he is survived by his wife, Susan Mahler, his sons John Exline, Steven Exline, and Danny Exline, his daughter-in-law's Marianne Exline and Melvy Exline, his 4 grandchildren, and 3 great grandkids; and

**Whereas, Jay's** message to keep hope alive and keep working to help transform our system to a wellness, resiliency and recovery focused system will continue to inspire us well into the future; and

**Now, Therefore**, this Board of Supervisors, County of Alameda, State of California, does hereby honor and recognizes the life of **Jay Herman Mahler**, a pioneer in the national mental health peer/consumer movement, for his leadership, vision and contributions to improving the public mental health system in Alameda County and beyond.

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**Keith Carson, President  
Supervisor, Fifth District**

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**Nate Miley, Vice President  
Supervisor, Fourth District**

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**David Haubert  
Supervisor, First District**

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**Richard Valle  
Supervisor, Second District**

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**Wilma Chan  
Supervisor, Third District**