

Patricia Schiller, a Sex-Education Pioneer, Dies at 104

By Neil Genzlinger

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Patricia Schiller, a lawyer, was volunteering at the Legal Aid Society in Washington in the late 1950s when she realized that litigation wasn’t really what many of the warring couples she was assisting needed.

“As a lawyer, I’d just look for a divorce or settlement or separation,” she recalled years later. “And that was inadequate.”

What they needed, she thought, was counseling.

That insight led her to a striking career change: She went back to college, earned a master’s degree in clinical psychology and became a leading voice in sex education and counseling. In 1967 she was the principal founder of the first accrediting organization in the United States for professionals in that field, the American Association of Sex Educators and Counselors (later expanded to the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists).

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