



Dream. Speak. Live.

*The Michael and Tami Lang
Stuttering Institute gives a
voice to those who stutter*
by Sharon Reynolds

SOLEIL FULLINCK, A 5-YEAR-OLD GRADUATE OF THE LANG STUTTERING INSTITUTE THERAPY PROGRAM, WORKED WITH DR. COURTNEY BYRD TO GAIN THE TOOLS AND CONFIDENCE TO SPEAK IN FRONT OF AN AUDITORIUM.

Michael Lang has many fascinating stories to tell about his long, distinguished career in law and finance. He sums up his career in one word — *improbable* — considering he has stuttered for more than 65 years, yet managed to thrive in professions that prize eloquence.

Although Lang always had a passion for learning, at age 5 he developed a terrible fear of school when he was forced to speak and expose his stutter to his teachers and peers. “In those days we learned to read by reading aloud, but I couldn’t say ‘Jane’

or ‘John,’” Lang remembers. “I couldn’t answer ‘here’ during roll call. At that time, speech therapy was in its early stages and often counterproductive, actually making my speech worse.”

Despite his learning challenges, Lang persevered. The Fort Worth native came to The University of Texas at Austin, where he earned his B.B.A. in 1967 and his juris doctorate in 1970. He continued his studies at Oxford University. His fear plagued him throughout his academic life. “I suffered great feelings of hopelessness in law school. I sat petrified and didn’t hear anything for the entire class because

the thought of getting called on was worse than death. Being ostracized almost wrecked me, many times.”

After entering the work force, Lang’s courage, hard work, and determination catapulted his career. He served as an attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice Second Appellate District, the U.S. Federal Power Commission, and the U.S. Federal Price Commission. He served as counsel and partner in the nation’s leading private practice law firms, was a founding partner of Norte Capitol, and created eight companies, which he led in public offerings on the New York Stock

Exchange. Throughout his career, he enjoyed many adventures while traveling the world.

Because everything to him was a challenge, he says, it made him think outside the box. "I almost quit everything, but I didn't. Instead, I stood out. I think I was able to accomplish the things I did because I learned to compensate for or work around challenges in creative ways."

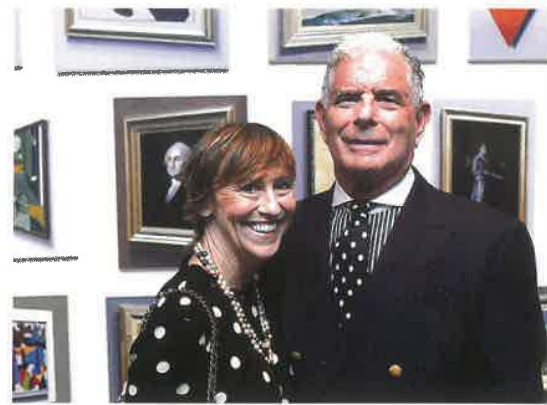
Today Lang enjoys a relaxing life in San Diego with his wife, Tami. In 2013 he was introduced to Dr. Courtney Byrd, associate professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at UT Austin, whose interests include stuttering treatment and research. Because of his struggles with stuttering throughout his life, he developed a deep passion for Dr. Byrd's work. Their friendship and respect for one another resulted in what Lang considers one of his greatest investments — a \$3.2 million gift establishing the Michael and Tami Lang Stuttering Institute. It is the nation's first nonprofit institute within a university devoted exclusively to stuttering intervention and research and the only specialized research center in the country to provide treatment services free of charge to children and adults.

Many barriers to treatment exist for the 15 million children and three million adults in the United States who stutter, yet as few as 1,250 clinicians (less than one percent of the total number of

U.S. speech-language pathologists) feel competent to treat the condition. A recent review of 115 accredited undergraduate programs in speech-language pathology shows that 97 percent allow students to graduate with no academic or clinical exposure to stuttering. In addition, few insurers cover the cost of treatments, leaving families to pay out of pocket or forego speech therapy entirely.

At UT Austin, every undergraduate student in communication sciences and disorders, as well as all majors across the university, now has access to advanced clinical research training in stuttering through the Lang Stuttering Institute. Additionally, Byrd recently established the student-run Lang Stuttering Institute Student Leadership Organization with a mission to unite students from diverse backgrounds and majors in order to educate, advocate, and spread awareness about stuttering through leadership and mentorship opportunities.

"This gift from the Langs emphasizes our university's mission that what starts here changes the world," says Dr. Byrd. "We're active in the clinic and allow that process to inform our research. It's important that we train students here so they go on to train others. We are contributing to a sea change. What's unique about the institute is that we're creating a community of advocacy, mentorship, and leadership, and we're doing that across our clients, our students, and our clinicians."



TAMI AND MICHAEL LANG ARE GRATEFUL TO SEE THE IMPACT OF THEIR GIFT DURING THEIR LIFETIMES.

The institute fills a sizeable gap in care and provides free services for all ages on a first-come, first-served basis. Community outreach programs include Camp Dream. Speak. Live., a weeklong summer camp for children; group therapy services; mentorship programs for past and present participants; parent education; free workshops for Austin-area speech-language pathologists; and an online training tool for speech-language pathologists across the country.

Stephen Washington Sr. stuttered his entire life and says it has been emotionally challenging for him since his son, Stephen Jr., developed stuttering. They live in Atlanta, but came to Austin when Stephen Jr. was given a chance to attend Byrd's camp from a wait list of more than 220 children. "I would have given my life to have had an opportunity like that. Because of Camp Dream. Speak. Live., my son will never have to know the same struggles I endured."

The Langs agree that their involvement in creating this institute leaves them fulfilled and happy. Working closely with Byrd on the mission of the institute and hearing of the many lives that they are touching as a result of their gift has helped Lang to grow in his acceptance of his own stuttering. "We appreciate the opportunity to help lead change. Our dream is that one day, people from all over the world will have access to these services, free of charge, and that nobody will be left behind." ✨

Start Now and Give for Generations to Come

Michael Lang, who has stuttered for more than 65 years, has recognized the tremendous gap in resources, research, and services available for the stuttering community worldwide. He and his wife, Tami, are making annual gifts to launch the Michael and Tami Lang Stuttering Institute. They also have an estate gift that will establish a perpetual endowment to continue the support far beyond their lifetimes.

Their estate gift is through a charitable remainder trust that provides several benefits to them — upfront charitable tax deduction, avoidance of capital gains on appreciated assets, and reliable income for life. Within 10 years, a significant distribution from the trust will come to UT Austin for the benefit of the Lang Stuttering Institute.

For more information about the various ways to give to UT Austin, please call 800-687-4602 or visit giving.utexas.edu/giftplanning.