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### **Foundation Board Mourns the Passing of Lyla Spelbring, Honorary Life Member**

January 21, 2011

Bethesda, Maryland – The American Occupational Therapy Foundation mourns the passing of Lyla M. "Spelly" Spelbring, PhD, OTR, FAOTA. Dr. Spelbring died on January 20, 2011 near her home in Howell, MI after a protracted illness. She was 88. Dr. Spelbring served on the Foundation board from 1971 – 1974 and again from 1985 – 1988. She has been an Honorary Life Member since 1990.

Dr. Spelbring had a long and distinguished career as an occupational therapist, an academic administrator, and a military officer. She served for 27 years in both the US Army and the Marine Corps through World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars. She retired as a colonel and continued to serve in the Army Reserves until 1982. As an academic, she had a distinguished career as the head of the Department of Associated Health Professions at Eastern Michigan University, where she held the rank of Professor Emerita in the Department of Occupational Therapy.

Dr. Spelbring earned her bachelor's degree in occupational therapy in 1951 and a master's degree in 1959 from Western Michigan University. She completed her PhD in Medical Care Organization at the University of Michigan in 1981.

Lyla Spelbring was a Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association and received its highest award, the Award of Merit, a richly deserved honor recognizing her many leadership roles. Spelly was also recognized by the Michigan Occupational Therapy Association as a life member and in 2008 received The Lucy Mary Kellogg Award for her extraordinary volunteer contributions to genealogy by the Michigan Genealogical Council.

Diana Ramsay, President of the American Occupational Therapy Foundation, released the following statement: “Dr. Spelbring was an exceptional woman with extraordinary leadership talents, who touched the lives of everyone with whom she came in contact. I offer my deepest condolences to her family on behalf of Foundation. The family plans a celebration of Dr. Spelbring's life in the coming months. The Foundation will convey details as soon as they are available.”



The family has conveyed Dr. Spelbring's wishes that in her memory, charitable contributions be made to the American Occupational Therapy Foundation to support its work or to the Eastern Michigan University Foundation for the Lyla M. Spelbring Endowed Scholarship.

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation is a 501c3 charitable, scientific and educational organization established in 1965. Its mission is to advance research, education, and leadership in the field of occupational therapy and to raise public awareness of the importance of enabling individuals to participate fully in life regardless of their physical, social, mental, or developmental circumstances.