

# Dwight Evans, Psychiatry

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*Dwight Evans*

Dwight Landis Evans, a professor emeritus and former chair of psychiatry, medicine and neuroscience in the Perelman School of Medicine, died on November 19, 2022. He was 75.

Born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Dr. Evans enjoyed weekend shopping at the bustling Central Market, attended J.P. McCaskey High School, and spent his summers at his grandfather's cottage in Mount Gretna, Pennsylvania. He first attended college at the University of Maryland, then received his BS in biology from Elizabethtown College in 1970. He then earned an MS in psychology and neuroendocrinology from Bucknell University in 1972 and a medical degree from Temple University in 1976. After completing a residency at the University of

North Carolina Memorial Hospital and a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholarship, Dr. Evans was appointed to the faculty of the UNC department of psychiatry in 1980. In 1992, he moved to the University of Florida, where he chaired the department of psychiatry and directed the Psychoneuroimmunology Laboratory. In 1997, he received one of the highest honors in the field of psychiatry, the Klerman Lifetime Research Award of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance.

After five years in Florida, Dr. Evans came to Penn's School of Medicine in 1997. Two years later, he was appointed the Ruth Meltzer Professor of Psychiatry (*Almanac* October 5, 1999 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v46/n06/psych4.html>)). He chaired Penn's department of psychiatry until 2016, one of the longest tenures at Penn Medicine. In addition, Dr. Evans oversaw the establishment of Penn Behavioral Health and served as psychiatrist-in-chief of the Penn Health System, director of the Penn Comprehensive Depression Center, and co-director of the Penn Neuroscience Center. A renowned investigator and clinician, his pioneering translational research on the neurobiology of stress and depression was continuously funded by the NIH for more than 30 years. Dr. Evans led the creation of the NIH-funded Penn Mental Health AIDS Research Center and served as its inaugural director. He also served on several Penn-wide committees, and in 2000, chaired the Search Committee for an Executive Vice President/Dean of the School of Medicine. In 2015, he was named the inaugural Roehrhoff Rickels Professor of Psychiatry; the next year, he retired from Penn and took emeritus status.

Dr. Evans was known internationally for his research on the impact of stress and depression on other diseases, including cancer, AIDS and cardiac cases. As such, he and his work received many honors. He received the Award for Research in Psychiatry from the American Psychiatric Association and the William C. Menninger Memorial Award for Distinguished Contributions to the Science of Mental Health from the American College of Physicians. Outside of Penn, Dr. Evans was president of the American College of Psychiatrists and of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and served on numerous other boards and committees. He published hundreds of academic papers, served on the editorial boards for many journals, and wrote and edited several books, including the influential *Treating and Preventing Adolescent Mental Health Disorders* (2005), which was awarded Best Book in Clinical Medicine by the Association of American Publishers.

"Despite the enormity of his professional contributions, Dwight will be remembered best for the personal impact he had on so many," wrote Dr. Evans' family in an online tribute. "His generosity and compassion toward others were boundless and constant throughout his life. Never seeking praise, attention, or recognition, Dwight would stop at nothing to help those around him, be it a loved one, a colleague, friend, or stranger. Despite a career marked by many accomplishments, Dwight was above all else a loving husband, father, and grandfather." Outside of his professional duties, he enjoyed fishing, sports, the golden oldies, animals, and a quality "dad joke."

Dr. Evans is survived by his wife of 52 years, Janet (nee Strickler) Evans; his children, Liz Evans, Meredith Roche, Ben Evans, and Chris Evans; his sons-in-law, Hadi Halazun and Michael Roche; his daughter-in-law, Francie Wheeler Evans; and his grandchildren, Tripp, Will and Chole Roche, Zayn Halazun, and Wilder Evans. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Dr. Evans' name may be made to the Dwight L. Evans Memorial Fund, which supports psychiatric residency training at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine ([www.pennmedicine.org/dwightevansmemorialfund](http://www.pennmedicine.org/dwightevansmemorialfund)) (<http://www.pennmedicine.org/dwightevansmemorialfund>). Checks can be made payable to Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, c/o Dept. of Psychiatry, 3535 Market Street, Suite 750, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104. Please note "in memory of Dwight Evans" in the memo line.