

# Richard Davis, Neurosurgery

MAY 25, 2021

VOL 67 ISSUE 39 ([HTTPS://ALMANAC.UPENN.EDU/VOLUME-67-NUMBER-39](https://almanac.upenn.edu/volume-67-number-39))

DEATHS

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*Richard Davis*

Richard Allen Davis, a neurosurgeon at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP) and an emeritus associate professor of neurosurgery in the Perelman School of Medicine, died on May 7 of congestive heart failure at his home in Villanova. He was 95.

Dr. Davis grew up in Chicago, the son of pioneering neurosurgeon Loyal Davis. After graduating from the Latin School of Chicago, he served in the U.S. Navy during World War II (and, later, during the Korean War). Dr. Davis earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Princeton University in 1947, a medical degree from Northwestern University Medical School in 1951, and a master's degree in anatomy, also from Northwestern, in 1956. He completed a six-year residency in neurosurgery at the Northwestern Medical Center under his father's direction, during which he was appointed a Kanaval Fellow. During his training, he also became a junior assistant to the distinguished neurologist Edward Arnold Carmichael at London's National Hospital. As a resident neurosurgeon, Dr. Davis learned the principles of patient evaluation, the critical importance of postoperative management, and the paramount significance of empathy in the surgeon-patient relationship.

In 1958, Isador Ravdin, the John Rhea Barton Professor of Surgery in Penn's School of Medicine, appointed Dr. Davis as an associate in neurosurgery. Dr. Davis became an assistant professor in 1963 and an associate professor four years later. His students, colleagues, family, and friends remember that Dr. Davis viewed his career as a calling. During his teaching at Penn's School of Medicine, he discouraged cold language like referring to patients as "cases" and urged compassion. Dr. Davis also served as a neurosurgeon at HUP. He retired from both positions in 1989.

In addition to his teaching, Dr. Davis also conducted influential research and published more than 50 peer-reviewed papers in medical and scientific journals. At Penn, he organized a research laboratory to investigate central nervous system control of gastric secretion and its relationship to peptic ulcer disease. Dr. Davis's findings anticipated surgical innovations for neurologically-based ulcers; he also introduced then-revolutionary stereotactic techniques to Penn's large brain tumor service and pain clinic. These procedures influenced treatment of Parkinson's Disease, the biopsy of brain tumors and treatment of other neurological illnesses.

Dr. Davis was fluent in French and had a passionate interest in warfare. He visited Normandy for commemorations of D-Day and self-published *Yours, D3* (1999), a novel about a young parachute officer who grapples with issues of honor and leadership during World War II. Dr. Davis's sister, Nancy, married Ronald Reagan, with whom Dr. Davis was close.

Dr. Davis is survived by his son, Geoffrey; daughter, Anne (Jon); and three grandsons. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Latin School of Chicago at <https://give.latinschool.org/campaigns/20824/donations/new> (<https://give.latinschool.org/campaigns/20824/donations/new>).