

## IN MEMORIAM

# In memoriam: Eugene S Paykel, MD, FRCP, FRCPsych, FMedSci

## ACNP Fellow Emeritus

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Eugene Stern Paykel was born on 9 September 1934 in Auckland, New Zealand. His research work focused on affective disorders in which he made significant and far-reaching contributions to the study of both causes and treatments of depression, spanning the fields of epidemiology, community psychiatry, psychological therapy, and psychopharmacology. He was the sole editor of the influential *'Handbook of Affective Disorders'* (editions 1 and 2) which brought together these disparate areas of study as an early example of the biopsychosocial framework for understanding mental illness. Overall, he published approximately 400 papers, with over 32,000 citations, and authored, co-authored, or edited eight books. As a reflection of his research interest in psychopharmacology, he served as President of The British Association for Psychopharmacology (BAP) and The Collegium Internationale Neuropsychopharmacologicum (CINP), as well as being accepted into ACNP membership in 1981, eventually becoming Fellow Emeritus.

His medical degree was from the University of Otago Medical School and his training in Psychiatry was at the renowned Maudsley Hospital in London. He went on to spend 5 years at Yale University where he became a collaborator of Myrna Weissman and Gerald Klerman. His article, Paykel ES, Myers JK, Dienes MN,

Klerman GL, Lindenthal JJ, Pepper MP. Life events and depression: A controlled study. *Archives of General Psychiatry*. 1969 Dec 1;21(6):753–60 has attracted 1594 citations. In 2001, Professor Weissman gave a University of Cambridge Paykel Lecture entitled, "How we began to study depression: A tribute to Eugene Paykel."




<https://www.psychiatry.cam.ac.uk/about/seminars/paykel-lecture/>.

After Yale, he returned to the UK in 1971, as a Senior Lecturer at St. George's Hospital Medical School, Dept Psychiatry, London and there moved up the ranks to become a Reader and then a Professor. During this time he built a prestigious academic department and a psychiatry training scheme, which rivalled that of the Maudsley. In 1979, he co-founded *Journal of Affective Disorders*.

Gene was made Chair of the University of Cambridge Department of Psychiatry in 1985, also becoming a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College; he was the second departmental Chair, taking over from Professor Sir Martin Roth. He was a popular and effective Head of Department. One of us (BJS) was fortunate enough to be appointed as Lecturer there in 1994 and found him to be a very supportive and inspirational mentor who was keen to establish links with the basic sciences of psychology and neuroscience, as well as being a wise clinician. His multi-disciplinarity made him a natural choice as a consultant for many prestigious grant panels and international bodies. He served on the Medical Research Council Neuroscience and Mental Health Board in the 1990s, was Vice-President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, 1987–1998, and received their highest honour by being elected as an Honorary Fellow in 2001. He also edited the prestigious journal *Psychological Medicine* from 1994 to 2006.

Gene stayed in post until 2001 but grew the Department and its international reputation quite dramatically by insightful appointments to chairs such as Ian Goodyer (Adolescent and Child Psychiatry) and Ed Bullmore (Neuroscience and Mental Health). He also supported the appointment of his successor as Head of Department, Peter Jones.

He died on 3 September 2023 in Cambridge U.K. and is survived by his wife Maggie and their sons Jon and Nick.

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