



IN MEMORIAM

Dennis P. Cantwell
Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences
Los Angeles
1939 — 1997

For 25 years before his untimely death in 1997, Dennis Cantwell was an inspiring and memorable force at UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute. Dennis graduated as valedictorian of his class at Notre Dame University and received his M.D. at Washington University in St. Louis. Following additional post-graduate training at the University of California, San Francisco and Washington University, Dennis completed his psychiatry and child psychiatry training at UCLA. Before joining the faculty as an assistant professor in 1972, Dennis spent a year as a fellow at the University of London. At UCLA, Dennis served as the Director of Training in Child Psychiatry for 20 years. In 1980, Dennis was appointed as the first Joseph Campbell Professor of Child Psychiatry. Although frequently recruited by other institutions, Dennis spent his entire professional career uninterrupted at UCLA.

Dennis' appointment as Director of Training in Child Psychiatry at an early phase in his career reflected his obvious brilliance as a teacher and innovator in psychiatric education. Foreshadowing contemporary psychiatric education in child psychiatry, Dennis created an eclectic and multi-disciplinary curriculum and training program in child psychiatry that embraced empirically-validated approaches to child psychiatric practice. Under Cantwell's leadership, the program in child psychiatry training grew so much in size that at one time Dennis proudly estimated that his program was educating 10% of all child psychiatric trainees in the United States.

Students in Cantwell's seminars were captivated by his encyclopedic memory, irrepressible wit, and sincere interest in their well-being. As an exquisite observer of people, Dennis made the scientific foundation of child psychiatry come to life by recounting details about the histories of major studies, and of the investigators involved. As a frequent lecturer to national professional audiences, Dennis was renowned for his ability to integrate contemporary approaches to child psychiatry with ready clinical application.

Dennis's research included seminal contributions across a wide variety of areas of research in child psychiatry, many of which served to spur the development of key areas of new research. For example, one of Dennis' earliest research publications was in the area of the psychiatric outcomes of children with speech and language disorders. Dennis was always happy to recount the history of this study of a group of English children with early childhood diagnoses of language disorders or autism. During his fellowship year under Michael Rutter in London, Dennis personally drove throughout the English countryside to perform follow-up assessments of the children, which formed one of the first longitudinal demonstrations of the impact of such delays on later adjustment. This report foreshadowed his widely praised landmark U.S. study of the psychiatric sequela of speech and language disorders in children. His initial observations paved the way for a number of researchers who confirmed and extended his observations of the high risk for psychopathology that youngsters with speech and language disorders display over time. Dennis followed these studies with other equally groundbreaking reports demonstrating the familial nature of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the diagnostic validity of symptom-based approaches to depression in children and adolescents, and the benefits of combined treatment approaches for optimal outcomes in children with ADHD. Dennis's accomplishments were recognized by his receipt of many honors during his career, including his being awarded every available research award for a child psychiatrist from the American Psychiatric Association

including the Blanche Ittleson Award for Research in Child Psychiatry, the McGavin Award for Prevention in Child Psychiatry, and the APA Research Award. He also received the Jay Franklin Robinson Memorial Award from the American Academy of Child Psychiatry and the Reynolds Award from Notre Dame University.

Although he received ample recognition for his many accomplishments, Dennis cherished his continued relationships with his mentors including Samuel Guze, Daniel Freedman, George Tarjan, and Sir Michael Rutter. Likewise, Dennis was very pleased to note the accomplishments of his students, many of whom have gone on to distinguished careers in academic child psychiatry. He enjoyed staying in close touch with former trainees spread across the country and was always available to advise them on questions on job choices and research challenges while always enjoying updates about their families.

Although spending the entirety of his professional career at UCLA, Dennis was a passionate supporter of his undergraduate alma mater, Notre Dame. He claimed to be a deputy scout for Notre Dame's football program and was never shy about sharing his recommendations. A devoted family man and father of five, he was remarkably able to balance his home and professional life while publishing over 200 scientific papers and authoring or editing five books. Even during his bouts with more frequent illnesses in his last few years, he always retained an unparalleled wit.

Dennis's vitality and energy will be missed by colleagues, students, and patients alike. His presence is clearly missed by the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences.

James McCracken