
Obituaries

Jack Lewis Evans, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Victoria, Australia

Jack Evans died unexpectedly on 14 October 1994. He was Senior Psychiatrist in the Repatriation Department, NSW and he played a very active role as an excellent and wise clinician and administrator and as an undergraduate and post-graduate teacher. He was Demonstrator in Psychiatry, Sydney University, Student Supervisor at Broughton Hall Psychiatric Clinic and a Foundation Member of the NSW Institute of Psychiatry. He took a personal and kindly interest in each of his students, and his integrity, wisdom and clinical skills deeply influenced many. He kept up-to-date with his reading of the psychiatric literature and brought to his clinical practice his own extensive experience, critical thinking, mature judgement and warm humanity, all expressed in a quiet unassuming way.

Jack was a big man. He was forgiving of others and had great patience and tolerance. He was never overbearing and had a wonderful knack of finding redeeming features in the most difficult of his fellows.

Jack was born in Forbes, NSW. He did well at his local schools and entered Sydney University from Parramatta High School, completing his medical degree in 1947. He did his residencies at Dubbo Base Hospital and then tried his hand at general practice for two years. With a hankering for psychiatry during his student days, he accepted a position as Junior Medical Officer in Morrisett Mental Hospital and had further experience in Gladesville and Parramatta Mental Hospital before obtaining the Sydney University DPM in 1955, following which Jack was promoted to Deputy Medical Superintendent at Kenmore Mental Hospital. Jack's psychiatric experience was extended by an appointment as Psychiatrist-in-Charge of the Yassman Child Guidance Clinic through 1955-57.

Jack became attracted by the vigorous developmental programmes then unfolding in Victoria, and accepted a position as Consultant Psychiatrist at the newly-opened Larundel Hospital, where he was soon promoted to Deputy Medical Superintendent.

In 1961, Jack accepted a challenge as Superintendent of a new regional mental hospital, Hobson Park, in the Latrobe Valley, servicing East and South Gippsland, and responded well to the challenge, opening up the region in a tireless endeavour with initiation of rehabilitative and community aspects and a public health approach. Two years later, he returned to Melbourne as Superintendent of the Sunbury Mental Hospital and Training Centre, gathering extra expertise in the field of intellectual disability while maintaining his broad interest in clinical psychiatry through his appointment as Honorary Psychiatrist to the Austin General Hospital.

Jack briefly returned to New South Wales in 1966 as Medical Superintendent of Callan Park Hospital before finally re-settling in Victoria to become Superintendent of the Children's Cottages, Kew. This was where his interest in intellectual disability consolidated and he came to play a significant role in community developments.

In 1970, Jack accepted an appointment as Deputy Chairman of the Mental Health Authority of Victoria and began his career as a leader in mental health/public health administration. Jack remained as such till his retirement in 1984, becoming Chairman of the Mental Health Authority for two years (1976-78) and then a Commissioner with the Health Commission of Victoria. During this period, he held an appointment as Senior Associate in Psychiatry at Melbourne University and was a member of the Medical Faculties of both Melbourne and Monash Universities. He was Chairman of the Premier's Committee on Mental Retardation from 1974-77 and served on the Medical Board of Victoria from 1980-89. In 1986, he accepted a position on the Advisory Board of the Centre of Human Bioethics of Monash University which he held at the time of his death. While with the Commission he stewarded services for the disadvantaged, making contributions to the reform of prison health services and the disabled; in fact, it was said that Jack could be described as the 'conscience of the Health Commission'. He oversaw the separation of mental health from

mental retardation, progressive growth in community mental health facilities, growth in general hospital psychiatric units and an extension of academic psychiatry.

Following his retirement at age 60, he worked as a Consultant Psychiatrist at the Frankston Community Mental Health Centre (1985-87) and was Consultant to the Frankston Hospital (1987-91). He worked in private practice at the Southside Clinic in Frankston until he ceased work in December last year. He assisted the Medical Review Board from 1991 where his experience and expertise were highly valued.

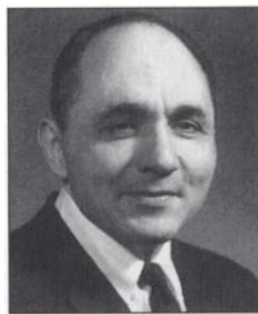
Jack played a significant part in a number of mental health professional organisations. He was Honorary Secretary of the Section of Neurology and Psychiatry of the British Medical Association (NSW Branch), Honorary Secretary of the NSW Branch of the Australasian Association of Psychiatrists (AAP) (1955-57), Chairman of the Victorian Branch of the RANZCP (1969-71) and Councillor of the RANZCP from 1969 to 1974. He was Chairman of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Group for the Scientific Study of Mental Deficiency from 1975 to 1982, was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (UK) in 1971 and a Corresponding Member of the American Psychiatric Association in 1976.

Jack was appointed Assistant Editor to the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* when it was founded in 1967 and became its Editor-in-Chief from 1970-1972; then Assistant Editor again till 1976 when given the title of Editor Emeritus. He published more than 20 papers and was joint Editor of two proceedings.

The latter years of his life were marred by double hip fractures which affected his ambulation to considerable degree but which he handled with courage and fortitude. He is survived by his supportive wife, Betty, his two children, John and Margaret, and five grandchildren.

ALAN STOLLER

This is a shortened version of the obituary which appeared in *Australasian Psychiatry*, Vol. 2, December 1994.



Eli Robins, formerly Professor of Psychiatry Washington University School of Medicine, St Louis, Missouri, USA.

Eli Robins died in December 1994. He made a monumental contribution to psychiatry. Early on, he said that psychiatric illnesses were

best viewed similarly to

other illnesses in medicine and characterised by a specific clinical picture, course of illness, and a distinct familial background. Ultimately, in the best of all possible worlds, specific laboratory tests would help differentiate one psychiatric illness from another. He had a great deal in common with British and Scandinavian psychiatrists in that he thought that the course of illness might be the best discriminator and at one point noted that follow-up studies were far more likely to contribute to psychiatric understanding than factor analysis of symptoms.

Robins graduated from Harvard Medical School and did his residency in Boston where he was much influenced by Mandel Cohen who had a classical medical viewpoint about psychiatry. Cohen suggested to Robins that he go west to Washington University in St Louis, as that department was headed by a person who provided hope for a scientific psychiatry, E. F. Gildea. Robins went to St Louis and became a neurochemist in the laboratory of Oliver Lowry, concurrently participating in teaching in the department of psychiatry. He proved popular with medical students and gradually began to influence residents.

These were the late '40s and early '50s when psychiatry had been inundated with a wave of psychoanalytic thinking. Most psychiatrists thought his views were mad, but, as his ideas reached increasing numbers of faculty and trainees, his influence grew.

He made numerous contributions to research. He co-authored important papers on hysteria, and later he made a study of suicide. His major contributions to the study included the demonstration that most suicides in the community suffered from affective illness and/or alcoholism. By the middle 1960s he was collecting the brains of suicide victims and looking for pertinent neurochemical findings.