

## Obituary

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# Professor Paul Kennedy



1959–2016

Professor Paul Kennedy, one of our longest serving NeuroRehabilitation editorial board members and British Clinical Psychologist of international renown, distinguished academic and productive researcher, unexpectedly passed away on September 13, 2016. The editors, managing editor, and his fellow editorial board members all mourn his loss.

Paul founded the Department of Clinical Psychology at the National Spinal Injuries Centre (NSIC), Stoke Mandeville Hospital and combined clinical, training and research work throughout his career. He enjoyed the interconnection between these worlds, truly believing that the best clinical work is research led. He also sought to inspire and encourage trainee and newly qualified clinical psychologists to be at the forefront of healthcare. He was Trust Head of Clinical Psychology at Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Joint Director of the Oxford Institute of Clinical Psychology Training and founding Trustee of Stoke Mandeville Spinal Research (SMSR). Paul grew up in Belfast and although he lived in England

for over 30 years, he always remained close to his Irish roots. He gained a first degree in psychology and later was awarded a DPhil from the University of Ulster, then undertaking Clinical Psychology Training at Queens University Belfast.

Paul was an innovative and pioneering clinical psychologist and combined clinical practice with his passion for research throughout his career. He published over 120 papers in peer reviewed journals, was editor of over 7 books and contributed to over 15 book chapters. He inspired hundreds of clinical psychology trainees during his career and supervised 27 postgraduate dissertations. Paul was the leading British authority on coping and adjustment in spinal cord injury, for which he received international recognition. He developed the Stoke Mandeville Needs Assessment and Goal Planning Programme which has been adopted by spinal centres in the UK and overseas. This programme is shortlisted for the 2016 Health Service Journal Awards for adoption and diffusion of best practice.

One of Paul's many gifts was to bring people together in the pursuit of knowledge and excellence in patient care. He was the founding Chair of the Multidisciplinary Association of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals (MASCIP) and European Spinal Psychology Association (ESPA). Paul was internationally known and received many awards of during his career. He was recognised by the Spinal Injuries Association as 'Outstanding Psychologist' in 2014; received the Guttman Prize Deutschsprachige Medizinische Gesellschaft Paraplegie, Germany (2011); the Distinguished service award of the American Association of Psychologists and Social Workers in Spinal Cord injury (2002), the Lars Sullivan Award (1999), the Golden Helix Award from Hewlett Packard European Healthcare (1995). He was visiting Fellow of the New South Wales Government in 2006 and Prince Fellow of the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago in 2000. His significant contribution was also recognised by Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust. In 2004 he received an award for service excellence, the Chairman's Award alongside NSIC colleagues in 2009 and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013.

Paul had diverse interests outside psychology including walking, tennis and music. He also had a passion for radio and had worked as an occasional reporter for BBC Radio Bedfordshire, a highlight of which was an interview with comedian Dave Allen. Paul was exceptionally hospitable and a connoisseur of good food and wine. He had a flair for recounting stories with a great sense of humour, and his colleagues and friends have many memories of delightful evenings of great conversation. It is

remarkable that alongside his professional achievements, his family knew him as a devoted father and husband who always prioritised time with family. He greatly enjoyed family holidays, and keeping in touch with his extended family in Northern Ireland. He is survived by his wife, Oonagh, daughter Julia and son Dermot.

Paul daily demonstrated compassionate clinical practice and was immensely well respected by colleagues, service users and trainee clinical psychologists. An online book has been established for Paul by his colleagues to capture his immense contribution to Clinical Psychology and spinal cord injury at <http://www.kennedymemorial.org.uk>. Warm tributes and memories have been contributed from his colleagues throughout the world. The central themes are his passion for SCI care, his values, vision, inspiration and ability to get alongside everyone no matter their rank or status. Paul was a great mentor, leader, colleague and friend whose consultation widely sought throughout the organisations in which he worked. His passing is a substantial professional loss for the spinal cord injury, neurorehabilitation, and clinical psychology communities, but more than that a deeply personal one because of the person that Paul was and the wisdom and integrity that he brought to all.

*Revised by Nathan Zasler, MD, co-chief editor, NeuroRehabilitation, based on an obituary authored by the Department of Clinical Psychology, National Spinal Injuries Centre, Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust Oxford Institute of Clinical Psychology Training, Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford.*