



IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM: James C. Harris, MD (1940–2021)

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James C. Harris, MD, passed away in April after 50 years at Johns Hopkins as a distinguished clinician, educator, scholar, investigator, and advocate. Jim was Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and of Pediatrics, former Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, founding director of the Developmental Neuropsychiatry Program at Hopkins and Kennedy Krieger Institute, and a beloved mentor to many of today's leaders in pediatric psychiatry. He was also a proud member and then fellow of ACNP, and on the organization's ethics and history committees.

While psychiatry director at Kennedy Krieger, Jim championed specialty clinics in developmental neuropsychiatry, and conducted research on self-injury among patients with Lesch-Nyhan syndrome and other disorders. His many contributions to the field include serving as lead author of the DSM-5 criteria for intellectual disability. He was a passionate and inspiring advocate for people with developmental disabilities, and his many roles included serving on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities during the Clinton administration.

Dr. Harris was the recipient of virtually every important national award honoring contributions to the psychiatric care of youth with neurodevelopmental disorders. A prolific writer, he authored several important books. Most notably, his award-winning *Developmental Neuropsychiatry* text helped establish that field as a specialty. Jim was intensely devoted to the academic enterprise, and when he called one of us (JBP) to say he was gravely ill, he also conveyed his fervent desire to continue to be productive. His unflagging commitment to his life's mission was deeply moving. He did, in fact, succeed in completing the second edition of *Developmental Neuropsychiatry* in just the last week of his life.

Described as a polymath by his longtime friend and colleague Dr. Joseph Coyle, Jim served as section editor for the *Archives of General Psychiatry's* Arts and Images in Psychiatry, where his contributions were nothing short of sublime. In this role, he chose paintings for the cover of the journal and wrote erudite essays that wove insight into the art together with reflections on the mind and mental illness. In one, he focused on a painting and its connection to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. This play, written near the end of the Bard's career, includes these lines:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors, as I foretold you, were all spirits and are melted into air, into thin air: ...We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.

There is irony here, as the speech describes the evanescence of a theatrical production, which might metaphorically be extended to a career, and a life. But of course, we are reading this work 400 years later, proving there is nothing little about some lives, and that spirits do not melt away, but continue to reverberate through time. Jim Harris was keenly aware of the power of writing and of the long-term impact of an academic medical career. He worked doggedly to burnish the legacy of Dr. Leo Kanner, penning wonderful appreciations of his one-time Hopkins professor, the discoverer of autism. All of us will certainly remember Dr. Harris, whose revels may have ended, though his spirit remains vital.

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