

Gerald T. Evans Award

Gerald T. Evans, a Canadian born in Gault, Ontario, taught high school before entering Medical School at McGill in Montreal. He was an independent thinker even then as demonstrated by his disregard for the ban on medical student marriages before graduation.

After graduation he went to the University of Pennsylvania and then to Yale where he added a Ph.D. in Physiology to his credentials. He then joined the Internal Medicine Department at the University of Minnesota in 1939. Among his duties were (1) director of the University Hospital Laboratory, (2) teaching clinical laboratory skills (e.g., urinalysis) to medical students, and (3) director of the oldest Bachelor of Science degree program in Medical Technology in the country (which had started in 1923). Initially, he informally trained internists in his laboratories. Individuals like Edmund Flink who later was chair of Internal Medicine at the University of West Virginia.

As the explosive growth of laboratory medicine started after World War II, he badgered NIH to establish traineeships in Clinical Pathology, although he preferred the term "Laboratory Medicine" (normally pronounced as two syllables: "Lab Med"). Ellis Benson was the first pathologist who trained in CP. Evans later cajoled NIH for permission to use one traineeship for a former Medical Technologist to pursue a Ph.D. in Biochemistry. Before that, he made do with what he called "operation bootstrap" (as in "pulling yourself up by your own"). He thus foresaw the need and helped create the training programs at both the M.D. and Ph.D. levels that we now take for granted. Even though Dr. Evans retired prior to the creation of ACLPS, his influence has been keenly felt. To honor him our academy established the Evans Award. This award is presented annually to a member for outstanding leadership and/or service to the society.