

## PAULA J. CLAYTON, MD

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 Jill Harkavy-Friedman | Bob Hirschfield | Maria Kovacs | Barry Lebowitz |  
 Christine Moutier | Maria Oquendo | Jane Pearson | Chip Reynolds |  
 John Rush | Kathy Shear | Matt Rudorfer | Naomi Simon | Murray Stein |  
 Myrna Weissman | Steve Zalcman | Sid Zisook



Paula J. Clayton was an inspirational leader in the field of psychiatry for the past 50+ years. She died, peacefully surrounded by loved ones, on September 4, 2021. We are proud and honored to be among the many who were touched by her gracious presence and able to call her our friend. Paula's pioneering work in mood and anxiety disorders and bereavement set the stage for clinical care and further research for years to come. Among her many honors and awards, Paula received the 1985 Athena Award from the University of Michigan, given to an alumna who has distinguished herself in professional and humanitarian endeavors. Paula was the first woman in the United States to chair a department of psychiatry. She also served as the Medical Director of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Paula ultimately retired to Pasadena California in 2015 but remained actively involved with former colleagues, mentees, students, lifelong friends, and family. She made each of us feel special and loved. The following are brief comments reflecting the special place Paula has in our professional and personal lives, hearts, and spirits.

Paula was a trailblazer, one of the first women researchers in the field of psychiatry, and, I believe, the first

woman chair. We could always count on her for a critical brainstorming session, interspersed with dedication and humor. Most importantly, she was a wonderful friend. We will miss her.

—Katie Busch and Jan Fawcett

Paula was a devoted student of her several mentors (especially Eli Robins and George Winokur), a great physician, teacher, and a serious investigator, particularly in the suicide prevention arena. I was fortunate to spend some time with Paula and Jan Fawcett in 2005 in Santa Fe encouraging her to consider the Medical Director position with AFSP. She did and had a great 2nd career over the next 8 years. I think those were truly enjoyable years for her—the job was challenging enough but she did embrace NYC and worked so well with Jill and others. In NYC, but not of it, she maintained her mid-western take on her duty as a physician and in my experience was unfailing in her kindness to others. She will be missed.

—Ray DePaulo

Paula served as AFSP's CMO from 2006 to 2013 and was instrumental in helping to expand AFSP's suicide prevention research and its educational programs. Among her many accomplishments while at AFSP, was her leadership in developing AFSP's first school-based educational program. More than sad and establishing the connections for the bi-annual AFSP/IASR International Suicide Research Summit. I am ever grateful to Paula for bringing me into AFSP and guiding me while she was CMO. Paula's expertise, drive, and passion for preventing suicide were unparalleled and she will be missed.

—Jill Harkavy-Friedman

I think about her fondly all the time

—Bob Hirschfield

I reflect on so many memories...meetings, dinners, site visits, discussions about recent publications, exchanges about recruitments, with laughter, learning, and respect. She will be sorely missed.

—John F. Greden, MD

In our daily work at AFSP, I have a feeling of gratitude for the foundation Paula provided just as AFSP was expanding into the comprehensive approach of research - education - advocacy - grassroots - chapters - loss&healing - clinical education. She had a vision that it would take all of that to move the needle on a complex problem like suicide. She was also extremely generous, kind, and funny during the time we spent together in 2013 as she was leaving AFSP, and I was joining.

—Christine Moutier

She did it her way! Paula crossed boundaries in various areas of her life. And she did so with a quiet determination, without much ado, and whenever possible, with a sense of fun. So, she was amused, among other things, by the fuss that was created by her appointment as the first woman to chair a department of psychiatry. Although she had gathered many accolades for her professional achievements, Paula stands out in my mind for remaining her genuine self and staying true to her roots. Among her many contributions, her work on mourning and bereavement and her concern about the mental health of trainees are particularly cogent and timely in this Age of Covid. I will greatly miss her. But she touched many people in the field and thus her influence will carry on. May her memory be a blessing.

—Marika (Maria) Kovacs

I learned so much from Paula! She was a fantastic investigator who had a keen eye for practical solutions to problems. She cared deeply about suicide prevention and worked tirelessly to push prevention forward. A strong yet kind leader, she will be missed by me and many others.

—Maria A. Oquendo

I had the privilege of working with Paula on the issues of depression and suicide in medical students, residents and practicing physicians. Paula cared deeply about improving mental health services for all of us in medicine. She was an inspiring example of a

physician-scientist, clinician, teacher, mentor, and friend. What a life well-lived.

—Chip Reynolds

Paula was first a friend and always an exceptional intellectual resource. Her commitment to helping both senior and more junior colleagues left a generation of beneficiaries. Thanks PAULA!

—John Rush

From the first days of my psychiatry residency in St. Louis, Paula was a teacher and role model extraordinaire. With time for research—a hallmark of Wash U training—but no budget, as my first research mentor Paula not only guided my project, but arranged for my cortisol samples to be assayed, not in the clinical laboratory, but shipped to the more sophisticated lab of Barney Carroll, demonstrating her commitment to the success of her mentee. Decades later, when I last met with Paula at the International Summit on Suicide Research in Miami shortly before the pandemic struck, she was still going strong, ensuring potent research and clinical agenda for the field going forward and augmenting an already sterling legacy that will last generations.

—Matt Rudorfer

She was such a force. So many people worked with her and loved her. I had the great good fortune to spend a lot of time with Paula during her New York years—in part because she was, indeed a wonderful and wildly fun person to hang out with and very much because she was a pioneer in recognizing the importance of grief—among her many other accomplishments. I hope we will include this part of her legacy as we work together to honor her, in sadness and (for me) in love. She was a truly amazing person. The world is not the same without her.

—Kathy Shear

A generous, warm person, and at the same time an academic powerhouse.

—Murray Stein

There were so few women in the field when we started out. Paula was a role model. She was confident, assertive, full of ideas, knew the research, and was a leader. This was all in the context of her broad smile, gentle humor, and beautiful presence. My late husband, Gerry Klerman, introduced us. She was one of the few but outstanding women in the Depression

Collaborative Group. I remember his words. "You'll like her." And indeed, I did. I can still hear her voice in my head.

—Myrna Weissman

I was Paula's medical student, resident, and subsequently her colleague and friend. Despite her incredible professional achievements, she always remained true to her Missouri roots: modest,

self-effacing, kind, and generous to a fault. Most of all I will miss her infectious laugh, broad smile, and twinkling eyes.

—Steven Zalcman

Paula was a personal mentor, role model, inspiration, colleague, and most importantly, friend. She will always remain near and dear.

—Sid Zisook