

In Memoriam:

Glen P. Aylward, Ph.D., ABPP (1950-2025)

Pediatric Psychology Leader, Professor, Scholar, Mentor



By Brandon S. Aylward, Ph.D., Terry Stancin, Ph.D., ABPP, and Michael C. Roberts, Ph.D., ABPP

Glen P. Aylward, Ph.D., ABPP, secured a professional place for developmental and behavioral pediatrics and in medicine as an exceptional pediatric psychology researcher and clinician. His influence as a psychologist in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) helped shape standards of care for premature and medically complex infants. His impressive scholarship focused on developmental assessment, early intervention, and long-term outcomes for infants and children.

This groundbreaking influence was a pattern for him as a pioneer, as he broke new ground as the first doctoral graduate in clinical child psychology from Georgia State University in 1979. He completed a pre-doctoral training year in pediatric psychology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. The majority of Dr. Aylward's career was on the faculty and clinical staff of the Southern Illinois University (SIU) School of Medicine. His faculty and administrative positions were officially titled Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry and Chief of the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics. In 1980, he founded the NICU Developmental Follow-Up Program in the Department of Pediatrics at SIU School of Medicine, a medical follow-up and developmental continuity clinic for high-risk infants that, to this day, continues to serve hundreds of families each year.

A prolific and influential author, Dr. Aylward contributed to the literatures of pediatric medicine, pediatric psychology, and neuropsychology. The publication of his book *Infant and Early Childhood Neuropsychology* in 1997 adroitly presented foundational concepts and research findings for the “assessment of brain-behavior relationships in the context of developmental change and maturation” (p. vii). Noting the hybrid nature of this evolving field, he invoked work from “neurology, developmental psychology, occupational and physical therapy, and pediatric/child clinical psychology” to neuropsychological/behavioral assessment of very young children whose rapid maturation processes pose challenges to health care professionals. He noted that “The major applications for infant and early childhood neuropsychological assessment: (1) to determine the current neurodevelopmental status of the infant or young child, (2) identification of infants who might benefit from intervention, (3) evaluation of the outcome of innovative medical procedures or other interventions, (4) documentation of change in neurodevelopmental status, and (5) prediction of later levels of function (outcome)” (p. 3).

Over his career, Dr. Aylward authored more than 140 peer-reviewed papers, chapters, abstracts and reviews, including many in the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* (JPP). His first JPP article was with Thomas Kenny in 1979: “Developmental Follow-up: Inherent Problems and a Conceptual Model”). In Aylward (2014a), he described his approach to clinical applications in the NICU by a case analysis of “Jenny” who was born prematurely with follow-through via periodic check-ups. He published frequently in medical and pediatric literatures to influence practice and research in early childhood assessment (e.g., Aylward, 2003, 2005a; Aylward & Aylward, 2011). These described the conundrum and the dilemma of assessment and prediction of cognitive abilities for preterm infants. Other notable publications include the *Bayley Infant Neurodevelopmental Screener* (Aylward, 1995), and other books, *Practitioner’s Guide to Developmental and Psychological Testing* (Aylward, 1994), and *Bayley-4. Clinical Use and Interpretation* (Aylward, 2020). The *Practitioner’s Guide to Behavioral Problems in Children* (Aylward, 2003) was often relied upon by primary care pediatricians in their clinical practices. Dr. Aylward is also one of the editors of the book, *Bayley-III: Clinical Use and Interpretation* (Weiss, Oakland, & Aylward, 2010).

Dr. Aylward was member-at-large on the board of directors of the Society of Pediatric Psychology (SPP) at the time when the organization was transitioning to a fully recognized Division 54 in the American Psychological Association (APA) after years as a Section in the Division of Clinical Psychology. He then served as SPP President in 2003-2004. Dr. Aylward’s presidential address at the APA convention was subsequently published in the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*. In this piece, he concluded his longitudinal research project:

Infants at risk for cognitive and motor deficits in later childhood can thus be identified by delineating and better understanding processes or subdomains that contribute to these deficits. Identification and understanding of these functional processes would also enable design and implementation of early interventions and provision of feedback to parents, both of which fall under the purview of pediatric psychologists. (Aylward, 2004, p. 562)

Later chairing the SPP Fellows Committee from 2002 to 2009, he also held additional roles with SPP and its Journal. Dr. Aylward was recognized as a charter Fellow of the new Division 54 (SPP) and as Fellow in five other APA divisions. Acknowledging his work in supporting the organization and advancing the field of pediatric psychology, SPP awarded him the Lee Salk Distinguished Service Award in 2008. Dr. Aylward was board certified by the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP), first in Clinical Psychology, and then in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology. He jokingly said he might sign his evaluation reports as ABPP² or ABPP(Squared).

Bridging the fields of Pediatric Psychology and Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, Dr. Aylward was an influential and highly regarded leader in the Society of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, serving as President (2007-2008) and as an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics* from 2003-2023. He was also a member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine.

Given his career long conceptual and empirical approaches to infant and child development, especially with expertise in delayed development, Dr. Aylward was the first external author chosen to revise the Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development, working for three years alongside international collaborators from Canada, Australia, the UK, France, the Netherlands, and the U.S. to produce the fourth edition (Bayley-IV). With the SIU School of Medicine, he created a YouTube video describing early identification and intervention for children with developmental delays through the Bayley Scales, noting the three important process of observation of a child's milestone development, administration of standardized instruments, and assessment of mastery or emerging skills (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7n6nek1jOs&t=23s>).

Dr. Aylward was more than entries on a curriculum vita might portray: he painted; he wrote poetry and creative nonfiction; he was a martial arts expert and applied his discipline to helping Parkinsons patients improve balance, coordination, and overall movement, turning his own struggle with PD into a gift for others; and he cultivated bonsai plants. As a poet, he was introspective and reflective about his career. In one poem, he described the profound impact of clinical patients on the therapists' emotional well-being:

Colors and lines on a canvas,
one that's supposed to become clean again
after the encounter.

But too many brush strokes
leave marks that remain.

Faint, yet accumulating,
indelible.

The canvas takes on a patina
maybe jaded,
probably needing assistance.

But there is no help here,
because I am the help.

(excerpt from Aylward, 2012, *The Hektoen International: A Journal of Medical Humanities*,
Vol 4(1). <https://hekint.org/2017/01/23/the-therapist/>)

He also was open about his own developing physical disabilities. As an insightful reflection on the first 15 minutes after receiving his diagnosis with Parkinsons disease, Dr. Aylward wrote, in part,

It was a long, surreal walk back to the car—stunned silence. I needed to get back to the afternoon's patients and waiting resident. I sat in the car for 15 minutes trying to regroup, process, and make sense out of what just happened. Already the denial and bargaining set in, with depression not far behind. It was quite the opposite from Warhol's 15 minutes of fame!

It could be worse.

Yeah, how?

Fold it up, tuck it away, play it cool. I have to continue. I can't recall the patients on that day or their issues, but I do remember the resident. Time to switch to my other role. Enough being the helped, now I'm the helper again.

'Hi folks, tell me what brings you here today,' said in a more empathic manner than I had ever done before. (excerpted from Aylward, 2017, *Aspects Magazine*, 40-1).

Dr. Aylward similarly expressed his creativity and reflections on life through his paintings with several reprinted in *SCOPE* magazine, a publication of SIU Medical School, including the cover painting depicting “Parkinson’s” for which he won First Place and reflects the anatomic and emotional aspects of the disease:



“Parkinson’s” Acrylic on canvas by Glen Aylward, SCOPE cover

2020; <https://www.siumed.edu/medhum/news/scope-2020-artists-statements.html>

After retirement, he wrote three books which were mostly autobiographical and filled with humorous memories and insights as life lessons (*Not the Waltons: The Making of a Boomer*, 2013; *The How To Do Stuff (Right) Book*, 2017; *Not the Waltons II: The Sequel: Boomers Growing Up*, 2020). These are available through Amazon.com

Dr. Stancin remembers that “For many within SPP, Glen was more than a colleague; he was a cherished friend and mentor. He was a man of remarkable spirit – fierce, fun-loving, and deeply loyal to his family and friends” Dr. Roberts recollects when he first met Glen Aylward, “at a convention of the American Psychological Association way long ago. I was trying to hang a banner for the social hour of the Society of Pediatric Psychology and couldn’t get it up high enough—Glen showed up early and stacked up three chairs and climbed on them to stretch and tape up the banner (which turns out was against the convention center rules). I had found an adventurous friend who lasted several decades. I truly respected Glen’s knowledge and enjoyed our interactions professionally and personally, which were many. The pediatric psychology community and interdisciplinary professionals for children’s mental health valued Glen’s scientific contributions, his clarity of writing and thinking, his enormous energy, and ‘scampish’ sense of humor.” Dr. Leah Marks recalls being supervised by Dr. Aylward for a practicum in the NICU follow up clinic at the medical school, “He would always take a great deal of time with me, making sure

that I was learning, getting exposed to interesting cases and building my confidence, particularly in assessing infants and toddlers, his true area of expertise and passion. He really instilled the importance of assessing and intervening with our youngest clients and their families with compassion. He also kept things light and funny while doing the difficult work.” Dr. Brandon Aylward (his son) memorialized, “My father lived a life marked by science, service, humor, compassion, and unwavering love. I carry immense pride in being his son. His unwavering dedication to helping infants, children and families not only helped shape the field but also inspired my own professional journey. I once imagined a future in architecture, but his example drew me to pediatric health, where I now strive to carry forward the values he embodied and the impact he had.”

Dr. Glen Aylward promoted the health and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and families through evidence-based care, research, and advocacy. He was a contributor who made our world a better place through his clinical work with children and families, his ground-breaking research and applications, and professional service. Importantly, he was an exemplar, a mentor to many, a supportive colleague, a leader in the field of pediatric psychology. He made a difference.

Online obituary for Glen P. Aylward, Ph.D., ABPP:

<https://www.staabfuneralhomes.com/obituaries/Dr-Glen-P-Aylward-PhD?obId=43757036>

Glen P. Aylward: List of Publications

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