



The University of Vermont
FACULTY SENATE

**Resolution in Memoriam
Thomas M. Achenbach, Ph.D.
Professor, Departments of Psychiatry & Psychology
1940-2023**

**Presented by Jeremiah Dickerson, MD
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The UVM Department of Psychiatry is mourning the loss of a beloved colleague and friend, Dr. Thomas Achenbach, Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology. At the age of 82, Dr. Achenbach died on October 5th, 2023, surrounded by family. It's with no hyperbole that Tom was an icon in the fields of child psychiatry and psychology; he essentially invented the field of developmental psychopathology and ever the consummate scholar, was continuing his research and writing until the end of his life.

Dr. Achenbach was born in Stamford, Connecticut. He earned his bachelor's degree from Yale University (summa cum laude) and then studied in Heidelberg, Germany. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota after which he returned east to work at the Yale Child Study Center where he walked the halls with Anna Freud and other child analysts. There he was inspired to explore methods to empirically assess children and would spend the next six decades deeply engaged in this work. Tom also spent time in Geneva studying with Jean Piaget and then worked for five years at the NIMH before joining the University of Vermont in 1980. At UVM, Tom established the Research Center for Children Youth, and Families and served as president since its founding in 2000.

At UVM, Tom further developed what became known as the 'Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment,' which has grown into the most widely used system for evaluating children and adolescents around the world. With his UVM partners, this work expanded into adults and older adults and more recently, extended into multiple societies. The ASEBA is used by researchers, clinicians, and educators worldwide and has been translated into over 110 languages. Dr. Achenbach authored more than 300 manuscripts and books. Given Dr. Achenbach's extensive mentorship and scholarly presence, his loss will be felt around the world and locally within the halls of 1 South Prospect Street.

Dr. Achenbach transformed the field of developmental psychology into a new field of developmental psychopathology. He was a creative, inventive, and critical thinker and those of us lucky to work alongside Tom felt continually inspired and humbled by his teaching and scholarly work.

Personally, Tom was passionate about classical music and enjoyed traveling the world. He lived on Malletts Bay in Colchester for more than forty years and extended family would join him for reunions on the lake; it was his favorite place in the world. Tom's wife and collaborator, Dr. Leslie Rescorla predeceased him in 2020. Dr. Achenbach is survived by his daughter, his son, his brother, his first wife, and their respective families.