



Aaron T. Beck, MD, 100, President Emeritus of Beck Institute for Cognitive Behavior Therapy; Professor Emeritus in Psychiatry, Perelman School of Medicine; and internationally recognized as the father of cognitive therapy, passed away peacefully on November 1, 2021.

In his transformational career that spanned more than seven decades, Dr. Beck revolutionized the field of mental health through his development of cognitive therapy (later referred to as Cognitive Behavior Therapy, or CBT), which he developed while working as a psychiatrist at the University of Pennsylvania. Originally trained as a psychoanalyst, Dr. Beck's explorations into psychoanalytic concepts of depression led to his development of cognitive therapy in the 1960s. He has been credited with shaping the face of American psychiatry, and *The American Psychologist* has called him "one of the five most influential psychotherapists of all time." Dr. Beck received numerous awards and honors in his lifetime, including the Heinz Award for the Human Condition in 2001 and the Albert Lasker Award for Clinical Medical Research in 2006.

Dr. Beck's scientific achievements have influenced generations of mental health professionals and impacted countless lives. CBT is one of the most studied and practiced forms of psychotherapy today and has been adopted by therapists around the world to treat patients with a variety of mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, personality disorders, suicidality, panic, alcoholism, drug addiction, schizophrenia, and more. Over 2,000 outcome studies have demonstrated the efficacy of CBT. Dr. Beck also developed sophisticated instruments for measuring symptoms of specific disorders, and contributed to the understanding of suicide classification, assessment, and prevention. His most recent work focused on developing and researching Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy for individuals given a diagnosis of serious mental health conditions such as schizophrenia.

In addition to his groundbreaking research, Dr. Beck led a remarkable academic career and was a highly respected educator. He attended Brown University, where he received a number of honors and awards. After graduating from Brown *magna cum laude* in 1942, he embarked on a career in medicine at Yale Medical School, graduating in 1946. In 1954, Beck joined the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, where he remained active as Professor Emeritus until his death. With characteristic humility and enthusiasm, Dr. Beck supervised and mentored hundreds of therapists and researchers who would go on to extend the impact of CBT to a wide range of medical and psychiatric conditions to communities around the world. In 1994, Dr. Beck founded the nonprofit Beck Institute for Cognitive Behavior Therapy in Philadelphia with his daughter, Dr. Judith Beck, to bring high-level CBT training to health and mental health professionals worldwide.

Beyond Dr. Beck's professional legacy, he will be remembered for his generosity of spirit, compassion, and love of family. He was an avid tennis player, playing regularly until his late eighties. He was also an enthusiastic reader, especially fascinated with the natural sciences, history and politics. As his eyesight deteriorated, he spent hours listening to audiobooks and excitedly sharing new theories and facts that he had learned. Born in 1921 in Providence, RI, Dr. Beck was the youngest of three surviving children. His parents, Elizabeth and Harry Beck, were Russian immigrants. In 1950, he married Phyllis W. Beck,

who later served as Vice Dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School and who became the first woman justice on the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Dr. Beck is survived by Judge Beck; their four children: Roy, Judith, Daniel, and Alice; their ten grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.