



*In memory of*  
**AUDREY  
EVANS**

UK/USA

**1925 - 2022**

**"A sick  
child is  
a sick  
family."**

**Dr. Audrey Evans, born in 1925 in England, was a prominent paediatric oncologist, researcher, and advocate.**

Her commitment to advancing the field of paediatric oncology saved many lives, and her advocacy for childhood cancer patients led to the establishment of vital support structures for patients and their families.

She received her medical education at the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, Scotland, where she was the only female student, and later earned a degree in Paediatrics at the University of Edinburgh in 1952.

It was during her medical training that Dr. Evans was exposed to the paediatric oncology field, igniting her strong commitment to fighting childhood cancer.

## Career and Accomplishments

In 1953, Audrey Evans moved to the United States. With a Fulbright scholarship, she studied at [Boston Children's Hospital](#) under Dr. Sidney Farber, the father of modern chemotherapy. She finished her medical training at John Hopkin's University and started her career at the [Children's Hospital of Philadelphia \(CHOP\)](#), spending most of her career there. She quickly gained a reputation as a very skilled physician with a big heart who did things a bit [differently](#). She is credited with the total care approach to patients, caring not just for their medical needs but also their spiritual, emotional and social needs. "A sick child is a sick family," Dr. Evans often said.

Over the years, Dr. Evans became a leading figure in paediatric oncology. She developed the [Evans Staging System for neuroblastoma](#). This system helped standardize the diagnosis and treatment of neuroblastoma, which in turn led to improved outcomes for patients. She has been referred to as the "mother of neuroblastoma." She was among the first to combine and effectively use chemotherapy and radiation to treat neuroblastoma in children.

One of Dr. Evans' most significant contributions to paediatric oncology was her work on the [Total Therapy Study](#), which led to a breakthrough in the treatment of childhood leukaemia. The Total Therapy Study combined multiple treatment approaches (chemotherapy, radiation, and bone marrow transplantation) to increase the survival rate of patients with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL). Previously, the prognosis for children with ALL was dire, but Evans' innovative approach transformed the survival rate from near zero to over 80% today.

Dr. Evans taught and mentored many students. "I met Dr. Audrey Evans when I was a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania, studying Paediatric Oncology," shares Dr. Kate Matthay, one of Dr. Evans' mentees. "She was a deep inspiration to me both as a strong, independent, clearly brilliant yet compassionate woman physician in the days when there were very few female medical students (my class had only 8% women). She took personal interest in teaching me many aspects of pediatric oncology, while also relating fascinating stories of her early training in Scotland. But most of all her work in neuroblastoma, a childhood cancer that fascinated me with its mixture of some lethal cases and others that spontaneously regressed, inspired my own lifelong career elucidating the biology and searching a cure for neuroblastoma."

## Philanthropy and Advocacy

Dr. Audrey Evans was also a strong advocate for children with cancer and their families. Recognizing the need for support to families of childhood cancer patients beyond

support for medical costs, she co-founded the first Ronald McDonald House in 1974. [The Ronald McDonald House Charities](#) provide a "home away from home" for families with seriously ill children, where the family can stay close to the child while he or she is receiving medical treatment. There are 375 such homes around the world today.

Dr. Evans' advocacy efforts also extend to the realm of research funding. She co-founded the [Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation](#), which has raised \$200+ million for paediatric cancer research over the years.

## Legacy and Impact

Dr. Audrey Evans' life and achievements have had a profound impact on the field of paediatric oncology. She improved survival rates for children with cancer and also contributed to a better understanding of the disease and the development of new treatments. She was a visionary in providing crucial support structures for patients and their families during some of the most challenging times in their lives. Her "efforts led to dramatically increased cure rates in a variety of childhood cancer, as well as establishing the infrastructure for all of the advancements made since. Her legacy in the field of pediatric oncology is unparalleled," said Dr. John M. Moris, CHOP, who worked with Dr. Evans for four decades.

Dr. Evans has inspired generations of paediatric oncologists and researchers to continue the fight against childhood cancer. After retiring from medicine, she established the St. James School in Philadelphia which provides excellent education for students in under-resourced neighborhoods.

Dr. Evans' life exemplifies the difference one individual can make in the lives of countless others. "I've had a great life," Dr. Evans was [quoted](#) saying. "I certainly have." She passed away peacefully at home in Philadelphia on September 29, 2022. She was 97.