

The Gallagher Family on Dr. James J. Gallagher

Dr. James J. Gallagher, one of the world's foremost experts in both special education and gifted education, died on Friday, January 17 at the age of 87 in Chapel Hill, NC.

Dr. Gallagher made numerous vital contributions to educational policy on state, national, and international levels. From 1967-1970, he served as the U.S. Associate Commissioner for Education and was the first Chief of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped in the U.S. Office of Education. In that capacity he outlined the components of the first Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act, beginning a national program of model projects that essentially changed the nature of special education for young children with disabilities. He subsequently served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning, Research, and Evaluation for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). He introduced the concept of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), used in public schools throughout the United States to ensure appropriate education of children with special needs. During his federal career, Dr. Gallagher approved the initial federal funding for *Sesame Street*, as well as the initial development of closed captioning technology.

He contributed to groundbreaking efforts to establish federal policy for gifted and talented students, including *The Marland Report* and *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent*. He was an integral member of the National/State Leadership Training Institute which established programs for gifted students across the country. During his career, Dr. Gallagher served as president of the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Association for Gifted Children, the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, and the North Carolina Association for Gifted and Talented.

Dr. Gallagher worked closely with then North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt on several initiatives to improve education in North Carolina. He was on the steering committee for the North Carolina School for Science and Mathematics, the first public residential high school for academically gifted students, a prototype for similar schools across the nation. He also was appointed chair of the North Carolina State Competency Test Commission. He co-founded STAGE, the Statewide Technical Assistance in Gifted Education network, which redesigned gifted education programs in North Carolina.

From 1970 – 1987, Dr. Gallagher served as the Director of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, one of the leading institutes dedicated to research in early childhood education. He was a researcher on the Abecedarian Project, one of the first scientific studies to demonstrate important long-lasting benefits in academic performance in a cohort of children from lower socioeconomic circumstances. During his tenure, he served as Director of the Carolina Institute for Child and Family Policy, and was director of UNC's Bush Institute for Child and Family Policy. Until his death, he served as *Senior Scientist Emeritus* at the Frank Porter Graham Institute, and also served a term as president of UNC's Retired Faculty Association.

Dr. Gallagher published over 200 journal articles and 39 books, including two seminal books -- *Teaching the Gifted Child* and *Educating Exceptional Children*. He has been the recipient of numerous national and international awards, including the *Gold Medal of the American Psychological Association for Psychology in the Public Interest*, the *John Fogarty Award for Distinguished Government Service*, and the *Old North State Award* (the premier award for public service bestowed by the state of North Carolina). Other awards include the *A. Harry Passow International Award for Leadership in Gifted Education* from the World Council on Gifted and Talented Children, the *Distinguished Scholar* and *Distinguished Service Awards* from the National Association for Gifted Children, the *J.E.*

Wallace Wallin Award for Contributions to Special Education from the Council on Exceptional Children, the *North Carolina Department of Education Lifetime Award for Exceptional Service*, and the *Peabody Award* from the University of North Carolina School of Education.

He was the son of Anna Mae Gallagher of Pittsburgh, PA and a WW II Navy veteran. He was a loving and devoted husband to Rani (his wife of 64 years), and a loving father and mentor to his children and grandchildren. He loved playing games with his family (which earned him the nickname, "Swamp Fox"). He was a fan of the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Pittsburgh Pirates, and the UNC Tar Heels. He also loved travel, good stories, bad puns, and a lively intellectual debate. Dr. Gallagher is survived by his wife Rani; his four children, Kevin (Peggy) from Atlanta, GA, Sean (Nancie) from Auburn, AL, Shelagh from Charlotte, NC, and Brian (Lisa) from Cincinnati, OH; and grandchildren James, Mary Grace, Andrew, Brendon and Colin (who lovingly called him "Grumps").