

Adrian Morrison, Penn Vet

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Adrian Morrison

Adrian R. Morrison, Gr'64, an emeritus professor in Penn Vet's department of animal biology and an internationally renowned researcher in sleep research, passed away on August 4. He was 85.

Dr. Morrison received an undergraduate degree at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA, in 1957, then received a veterinary degree from Cornell University (1960), an MS, also from Cornell (1962), and a PhD in anatomy at Penn (1964). Afterwards, he completed postdoctoral training in sleep research at the University of Pisa, Italy. While working toward his PhD, he accepted a part-time position at the Media Veterinary Hospital in Media, PA, but in 1966, he joined the faculty of Penn's School of Veterinary Medicine as an associate professor of anatomy in the department of veterinary biology. In 1974, he was promoted to professor in the same department. Dr. Morrison also had a secondary academic appointment in the School of Arts and Sciences' department of psychiatry.

In the mid-1980s, Dr. Morrison and a group of Penn faculty got together to plan for development of sleep research at Penn. The group obtained NIH funding to establish a specialized center of research in obstructive sleep apnea. Then, in 1991, he spearheaded this center's expansion into the Center for Sleep and Respiratory Neurobiology, the first academic center dedicated to sleep research. Today, the center has generated an offshoot center, the Chronobiology and Sleep Institute, where an annual Adrian Morrison Lecture honors Dr. Morrison's foundational role in launching the field of sleep studies at Penn. Outside of his academic positions at Penn, Dr. Morrison was heavily involved in the University community, serving on several Faculty Senate committees (including the Senate Executive Committee) and on a 2000 committee for the selection of a new dean of Penn Vet.

Dr. Morrison conducted pioneering research into the neurobiological mechanisms controlling sleep. He co-founded the Sleep Research Society and in 1995, he served as its president; he also served as president of the World Federation of Sleep Research Societies from 2001 to 2003. He wrote over 130 peer-reviewed articles and over 30 editorials on sleep science and ethical use of animals in research, as well as editing seven major books on the neuroscience of sleep. In 2002, Dr. Morrison received the Sleep Research Society Distinguished Scientist Award for his service to the field. Dr. Morrison started his early neurobiological studies of sleep when there were very few investigators worldwide engaged in this area of research. He researched REM sleep extensively and argued in favor of important forebrain mechanisms modulating sleep at the time when the prevailing thought was that sleep was principally controlled by the brainstem. His later work focused on the limbic system, specifically the modulation by the amygdala of brainstem sleep circuitry. Most of Dr. Morrison's early work was conducted using the cat as a model, the dominant animal model for sleep research at the time.

While working with cats, Dr. Morrison drew on his credentials as a veterinarian to champion ethical treatment of animals in sleep studies, attracting protests and break-ins to his office at Penn (*Almanac* February 6, 1990 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v36pdf/n22/020690.pdf>) and February 13, 1990 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v36pdf/n23/021390.pdf>)). Still, he never shrank from the challenge of advocating for the importance of animals in biomedical research; he founded the National Animal Interest Alliance and served as president of the Pennsylvania Society for Biomedical Research and on the board of Incurably Ill for Animal Research and Americans for Medical Progress. He organized the neuroscience community around this issue and engaged in major efforts at the level of the National Institute of Mental Health to promote and support ethical animal research. In recognition of these efforts, he received numerous awards, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award. Dr. Morrison also served on governmental task forces on ethical animal research in the U.S. Public Health Service and the National Institutes of Health. In 2009, Dr. Morrison published a book, *An Odyssey with Animals: A Veterinarian's Reflections on the Animal Rights & Welfare Debate*, in which he argued in support of the humane treatment of animals in biomedical research. In 2013, he also published *Brandywine Boy*, a memoir that expressed his love for his rural home along the Brandywine Creek.

He will be missed by a wide community of colleagues, all of whom held him in the highest regard.