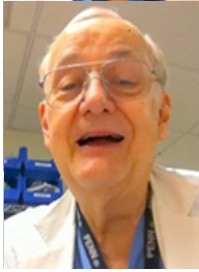


Brett Gutsche, Anesthesiology

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Brett Gutsche

Brett Bruce Gutsche, an emeritus professor of anesthesia in the department of obstetrics and gynecology in the Perelman School of Medicine, passed away from complications of Alzheimer's disease on April 13. He was 87.

Born in Pittsburgh, Dr. Gutsche moved with his family during childhood to Delmar, NY, where he graduated from Bethlehem Central High School. He then went on to attend Williams College, graduating in 1956, then earned an MD in 1961 from the University of Rochester. Dr. Gutsche completed his internship and residency at the Duke University Medical Center, specializing in anesthesiology. After completing his residency, Dr. Gutsche enlisted in the U.S. Public Health Service and moved with his family to Anchorage, Alaska, a region that remained near and dear to him throughout his life.

In 1969, Dr. Gutsche joined the faculty of Penn's School of Medicine and the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP) as an assistant professor of anesthesia. Four years later, he was promoted to associate professor. Additionally, in 1971, he accepted a secondary appointment as an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at HUP, and in 1975, he became an associate professor in that department. He became a full professor/clinician-educator of anesthesia in 1979. Dr. Gutsche conducted groundbreaking work in obstetrical anesthesia. He found safer, more effective ways to relieve childbirth pain and worked towards a better understanding of the dangers of pregnancy, such as pre-eclampsia and fetal distress. Dr. Gutsche was included in several 1990s editions of *The Best Doctors in America*, a guide curated by Woodward/White, Inc., recognizing his service to the field. In 2003, he received the Distinguished Service Award of the Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology (*Almanac* May 27, 2003 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v49/n34/honors.html>)).

Dr. Gutsche was recognized at Penn as well. In 1980, he won a Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching; seven years later, he won the School of Medicine's Robert Dunning Dripps Memorial Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education (*Almanac* May 26, 1987 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v33pdf/n36/052687.pdf>)). The award citation noted that Dr. Gutsche was "a pioneer in the specialty of anesthesia who trained over 15 percent of those physicians who hold academic positions in anesthesia in the country's medical schools." A student was quoted describing him as "the finest and most caring of physicians who is an exemplar in integrity and professional excellence." In 1999, he retired from Penn, taking emeritus status.

Outside of his professional responsibilities, Dr. Gutsche loved opera music, attending numerous performances at the Met in New York City. He also supported the Glimmerglass Opera Festival and the Bach Choir of Bethlehem. "Brett worked hard but he was also well-known at HUP for his sense of humor, not taking himself too seriously, and always enjoying a good laugh," said his family in an online tribute.

Dr. Gutsche is survived by his three children, Marcia Gutsche Rutledge (Gregory), Stuart (Patricia), and Stephen (Ann-michele); four grandchildren; and four nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held on April 29. In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions be made in his memory to the Glimmerglass Festival (Cooperstown, NY) or the Alzheimer's Association (<https://www.alz.org/> (<https://www.alz.org/>)).