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# Twin Matters

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A Family Newsletter from the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry (MATR)



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# Twin Matters

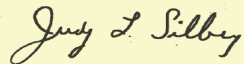
A Family Newsletter from the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry (MATR)

## Dear MATR Community,

In this version of Twin Matters, we bring you fun twin-centric content with stories and pictures provided to us by our twin families. While the bulk of this newsletter will focus on “fun” twin topics, we regret that similar to life, with its ups and downs, we also have sorrowful news to share with the passing of Dr. Lindon Eaves: a world-renowned scientist and twin researcher who is a big reason the MATR exists today.

Each and every MATR participant plays a special role in helping scientists learn more about the factors that drive human health and behavior as well as discoveries that may not be possible otherwise. So we thank you for being a part of the MATR community!

Sincerely,



Judy Silberg, PhD  
MATR Scientific Director

## URGENT: WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!



More and more of our surveys are moving online and require that we send email invitations to our twins. Want to make sure you don't get

left out? Take a minute to send us your current email address so we can include you!

Simply scan the QR code above and click on the link that pops up. (*TO SCAN: open your mobile device camera and point it at the QR code and click the link*) or visit: [go.vcu.edu/matrupdate](http://go.vcu.edu/matrupdate).

Everyone who submits their email address will be entered into a raffle for a (\$25) gift card as a token of our appreciation for taking a minute to update us. We value you!

## Remembering the Honorable Reverend Lindon John Eaves, Ph.D.

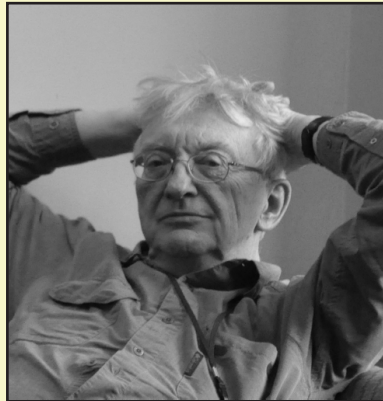


Photo courtesy of VCU's Hermine Maes, PhD. Longtime friend and colleague of Dr. Eaves.

In March of this year the MATR lost a longtime leader and friend. Dr. Eaves was known internationally for his intellectual passion, kindness, deep compassion, and humor.

Dr. Eaves began his journey at VCU in 1978 as a visiting professor from England. Since we had no computers in offices back then, Dr. Eaves spent much of his time in the computer lab running and printing massive computer programs. Carol Williams, MATR Participant Coordinator, has fond memories of him with his feet propped up on the desk, revealing his brightly colored socks, telling humorous stories and asking for a “scribe” (it took a minute to realize he wanted a pen). His engaging humor was matched by his remarkable

intellect so VCU was lucky that Dr. Eaves returned in 1981 to join VCU faculty full-time, where he became a distinguished professor with appointments in the Departments of Human Genetics as well as Psychiatry. During his tenure at VCU he achieved many well-deserved rewards and recognition.

To say that Dr. Eaves was instrumental in furthering twin study methodology and heritability research is an understatement. His ideas, mathematical models, and methods permeate throughout the research world and gained international recognition. Near and dear to the MATR staff are his influential efforts in developing and establishing large twin studies, including the Virginia 30,000 Study; Genes, Environment, and Development Initiative (GEDI); and the ABD Study/Registry. He was a key member of establishing the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry, and we would not exist as the largest twin registry in the nation without his efforts. In 1996, he went on to help co-found, the Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics at VCU with colleague Kenneth S. Kendler, M.D., distinguished professor of psychiatry and fellow twin researcher. Dr. Eaves served as co-director until his retirement in 2016.

Judy Silberg, Ph.D., Scientific Director of the MATR, was a student and then a colleague and good friend of Dr. Eaves.

She provides a glimpse of his influence with this statement: “His was an astonishing intellect and he was a brilliant teacher. He was a wonderful friend and colleague.”

Lindon Eaves was an exceptional, complex individual. He was a man of science as well as of the cloth, a family man and friend, and we cannot fully capture him in this remembrance. Lindon will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

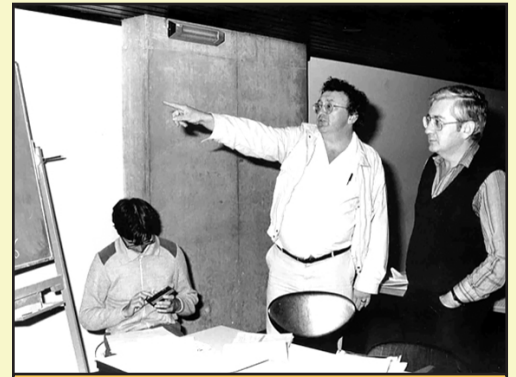


Photo taken in 1987 at the first twin research workshop in Leuven, Belgium. Dr. Eaves is in the center.

Note: Portions of this article were excerpted from a VCU News Article (author A.J. Hostetler)

# Stories and Pictures from



We've been together in school for nearly two decades, from our first "first day" to our last "first day." From the same class in preschool in Virginia to the same major at MIT to business school at Harvard, we've supported and challenged each other every step of the way. We even still pose in the same way for photos (Emily on the left, Charlotte on the right)! We're excited for one last year together and are grateful to our family, friends, and teachers.

*-Emily K, MATR Member since 2000*



Bringing in the teen years during the pandemic.

Thirteen years twinning!

*-Kimberly F., MATR Member since 2016*

We have twin older sisters, no doubt fraternal, so when we came along, the same was assumed. In high school our DNA was tested through MCV's Twin Study and we learned we are identical!

It explained so much!

*-Susan S., MATR Member since 1985*



# around the MATR...



A year before my identical twin sister and I turned 40, I read an article about twin sisters who had climbed Mount Kilimanjaro for their 40th birthday. With great excitement, I sent her a copy of the article and suggested that we plan a 40th birthday adventure. Her response, “a birthday adventure sounds like a great idea, but I’m NOT climbin’ Mount Kilimanjaro!” It took us several months to decide what to do but eventually we chose spending the week of our 40th birthday riding horses at a dude ranch in Arizona and hiking to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. We had a great time, and the best part was just being together. Since then, we have spent our birthday together every year and have enjoyed a

number of birthday adventures including a Caribbean Cruise, a week in San Antonio, TX, “get in free on your birthday” at Disney World, cross country skiing in the mountains of western Maryland, Climbing Old Rag mountain in Shenandoah National Park, climbing Stone Mountain in Georgia, a trip to Costa Rica (50th birthday), etc. A couple of months before things shut down due to the COVID pandemic, we enjoyed our 60th birthday adventure – climbing over 350 steps to the crown of the Statue of Liberty on our birthday followed the next day by taking a cake decorating class at Carlo’s Bakery, owned by celebrity chef Buddy Velastro. Once again, it was a memorable twin birthday adventure. Now we are closing in on 62 and soon my sister will ask me, “So what are we going to do for our birthday?” No doubt we’ll think of something!



*Submitted by Teresa G., MATR Member since 2013*

## TWIN360: MATR Twins Shed Light on the Pandemic



Starting this past fall, the MATR has been inviting twins to participate in a new research project called Twin360. This project is testing out an innovative platform where research participants create their own user accounts that provide access to the Twin360 Dashboard. This presents a streamlined, easy way for twins to participate in this important study! Currently, Twin360 is gathering information about how the pandemic has impacted twin families. Since we have all been impacted by the pandemic in some way, all participants that are

willing to be part of the study are important to the research! So whether you have had COVID-19 or not, your participation matters! The study is also interested in learning more about what factors lead to someone developing long-term COVID symptoms, known as “long-haulers.” Your unique ‘twinness’ provides the ideal opportunity to help the researchers unravel the impact of genetic and environmental factors that might influence whether someone does or does not develop into a long-hauler. This is an ambitious, significant research project and needs as many willing twin pairs (triplets, etc) as possible to be successful. Because of this, we are using various contact methods to reach as many of you as possible. Please keep an eye on your email inbox and your mobile devices as we may try texting you. Thank you to everyone that has contributed to this project - feel free to encourage your twin to join the study too! Stay tuned to future newsletters for updates on the Twin360 project.