

EVA VERPLANCK, PH.D.

August 25, 1924 - September 4, 2021

*The Chester County Community Foundation
pays tribute to the incredible
accomplishments of Eva L. Verplanck, Ph.D.*



Eva was a devoted supporter of the Chester County Community Foundation. As her service as a Board member and Board Chair was stellar, she was bestowed the honor of Emeritus Board Chair in 2004. Eva believed passionately in the power of philanthropy to transform lives.

Eva focused her formidable brainpower and generous heart on strengthening community leadership throughout the region. All causes—environment, arts, culture, historic preservation, health care access, education, social justice—were of great concern to her. Until her final days, Eva took calls from charity board and staff leaders, continuing to impart insightful, wise counsel to community leaders. Eva's scientific attention to detail, her powerful skills of observation, and her deep emotional intelligence were second to none.

On September 4, 2021, at the age of 97, Eva departed this world that she so greatly impacted and inspired. Eva's daughter Anne and son Philip were at her side.

The Chester County Community Foundation pays tribute to the incredible accomplishments of **Eva Low Verplanck, Ph.D.** **Eva believed passionately in the power of philanthropy to transform lives.**

Eva focused her formidable brainpower and generous heart on strengthening community leadership throughout the region. **A myriad of causes—environment, arts, culture, historic preservation, health care, education, social justice, eliminating racism, and empowering women—were of great concern to her.**

We've asked a few Community Foundation Jordan Award winners & Board Leaders to answer two questions:

- 1) How did you first become acquainted with Eva Verplanck?
- 2) Remarks about this remarkable woman.

Click here for our video online:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DENpAaL_Kto&list=PLSJ-z0OpQDepyWE0Kpyfot53k9xi4NtXK&index=10

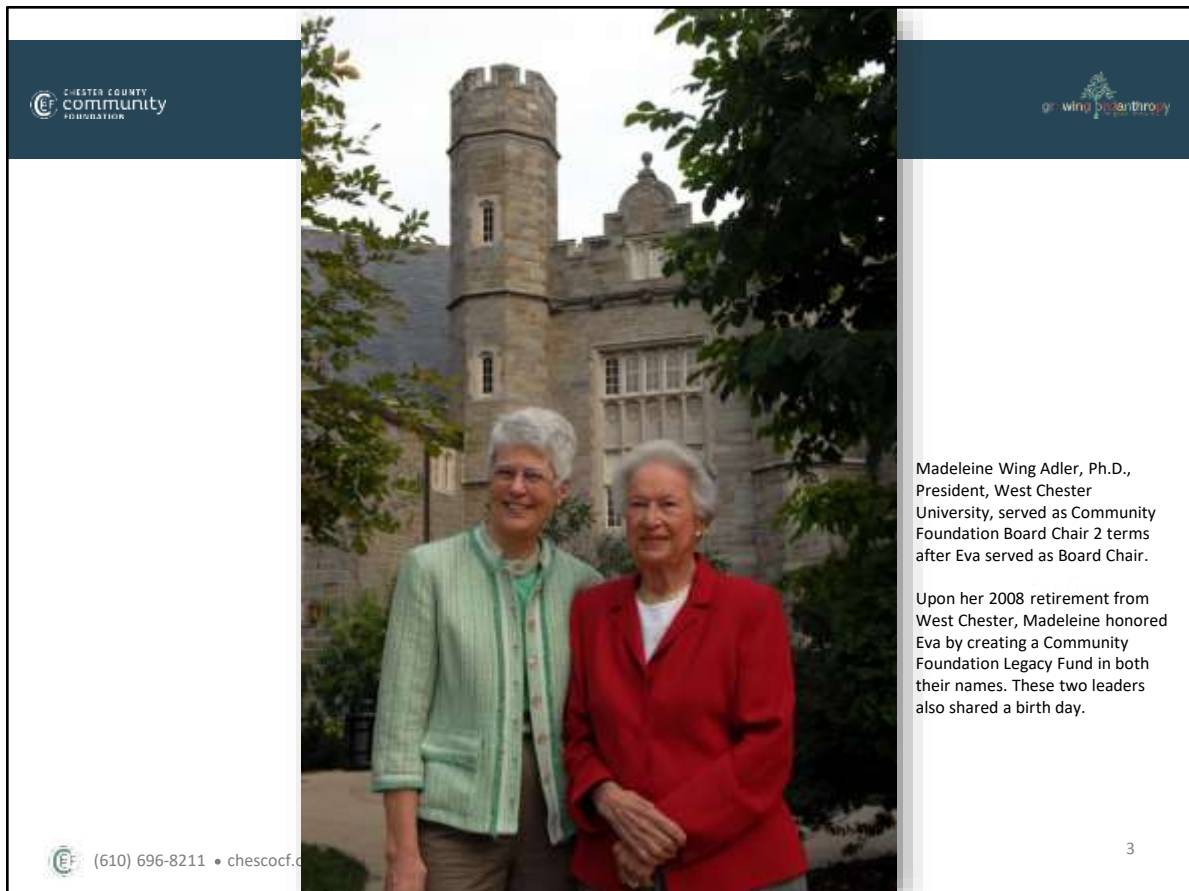


Board Chair, CCCF,
2004

Karen Simmons, President/CEO, CCCF:

The first time I met Eva Verplanck was in 1997. I headed LaSalle's Nonprofit Center, and the Community Foundation asked me to lead a Board of Directors workshop at Penn State Great Valley. One of the workshop attendees came up to me at a break to discuss the organizational life cycle theory I had explained to the class. It was Eva. She found Org Life Cycles theory to be quite illuminating, and she was excited to apply the construct to the various boards she knew.

Five years later, in 2001, Eva turned up again, this time as a member of the search committee for the CEO position at the Community Foundation. There I was in the interview hot seat; and I stared right at her, trying in vain to remember where I had met her before. Of course, always at the top of her game, Eva let me know right away.



Madeleine Wing Adler, Ph.D., President, West Chester University, served as Community Foundation Board Chair 2 terms after Eva served as Board Chair.

Upon her 2008 retirement from West Chester, Madeleine honored Eva by creating a Community Foundation Legacy Fund in both their names. These two leaders also shared a birthday.

During my early tenure at the Community Foundation, Eva became the third Chair of the Board. She accomplished so much that she was bestowed Emeritus Board status: As Eva liked to say, “As an Emeritus board members I get to do the work, but don’t have a vote. But that’s fine with me, as my voice still counts.”

A few years later, Madeleine Wing Adler, Ph.D., became Board Chair and was also bestowed Emeritus status. Heading the Community Foundation with these two stellar women as Chairs of the Board was an honor, a privilege and a joy.

Madeleine & Eva shared not only a birthday; but also a passion for community philanthropy; stellar leadership; wisdom; and a bent toward action. Upon her 2006 retirement from WCU, Madeleine created The Adler Legacy Fund Honoring Eva L. Verplanck, Ph.D.

TRIBUTE

Jordan Award Honorees

The Jordan Award was created in 1999 to honor the longstanding commitment to Chester County philanthropy exemplified by Community Foundation founder Dr. Henry A. Jordan and his wife Barbara McWell Jordan.

Timeline of Jordan Award Honorees:

- 2002: Barbara B. Halsey & Robert Halsey
- 2003: Charles Linton "Doc" Jordan, Jr. & Deborah Jordan
- 2004: David M. Fries, Sr. & Phyllis Fries
- 2005: Joe J. Weisback, Ph.D. & Barbara Spang
- 2006: Jennifer & Robert McNeil
- 2007: **Eva Low Verplanck, Ph.D.**
- 2008: Joseph & Merry Cloninger West Cloninger
- 2009: John & Barbara Cordero
- 2010: Mary & Andrew Thompson, Jr. & Rose Thompson
- 2011: Barbara Lohr & Peter Cloninger, Robert & Suzanne
- 2012: Elizabeth Thompson
- 2013: Harold J. Martin & Deborah Martin
- 2014: Patricia "Pam" Wilbur & Howard Wilbur
- 2015: Mike & Nancy Moore & Susan Spang
- 2016: Carol West, Ph.D. & Deborah
- 2017: The Hill Family & Westphal
- 2018: Wilson & John Goodman & Bill O'Leary
- 2019: Richard Harrell & Phyllis Harrell
- 2020: Dr. Thomas Meurer & Deborah Spang
- 2021: [Recipient name partially obscured]

A year later, in 2007 Eva was honored with our Jordan Award, for longstanding, widespread commitment to legacy philanthropy.



Chester County Community Foundation
2007 Jordan Award for Chester County Philanthropy
Longstanding, Impactful, Widespread Generosity

As I remember, Eva wrote her Jordan Award acceptance speech on the back of an envelope. It contained 3 lines. She knew how to be brief, and to get on with the business at hand.



Eva is one of the greatest networkers I have ever witnessed in action. Although she SAID she hated special events, she attended Every Single One of them.

Sweet Charity
March 2016



EVA LOW VERPLANCK, Ph.D.
August 25, 1924 – September 4, 2021

Sweet Charity
March 2012



TRIBUTE



Eva always dressed in a professional, elegant manner; with perfect hair and well-chosen jewelry.

EVA LOW VERPLANCK, Ph.D. Sweet Charity
August 25, 1924 – September 4, 2021 March 2019
TRIBUTE



Even when with our Sweet Charity cupcake.

TRIBUTE



In 2020, macular degeneration combined with the COVID pandemic struck Eva hard, in that it isolated her from her greatest joys in life: seeing people of all ages and backgrounds and immersing herself in every single detail of the comings and goings of the charities and people she adored.

At age 96, she could no longer ‘work a room’ at a cocktail reception, and it pained her deeply. She couldn’t see, so she couldn’t navigate the faces in a room, plus she very quickly got extremely fatigued. It frustrated her greatly. Let me repeat...she was 96. 96. Are you kidding me? At 95, Eva Verplanck worked a room better than people half her age.



Eva continued to be our Rock Star, agreeing to in-person interviews so we could capture her thoughts on legacy philanthropy & community leadership.



To almost the very end, Eva continued to push herself. Here she is, supervising me weeding her garden and insisting that I take some of her hot pepper plants. She could hardly see; she could hardly stand up. But she continued to inspire me and think about the future, to the very end.

EVA LOW VERPLANCK, Ph.D.

August 25, 1924 – September 4, 2021

TRIBUTE

2014 summer w/Aaron Martin Ph.D.

2015 August w/Carol Clark & Karen Simmons



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For each birthday, surprise guests appeared to help celebrate at Eva's birthday dinner. Special thanks to each person who phoned Eva on her 97th birthday...making the last call a few weeks before Eva left this earth.

INSPIRE: LEGACY FUNDS

Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Eva Low Verplanck, Ph.D.

1924-2021

Eva Verplanck Ph.D. focused her formidable business and generous heart on strengthening community leadership. A myriad of causes—environment, arts, culture, historic preservation, health care, education, social justice, advocating seniors, and empowering women—were of great concern to her.



Eva Low was born in Vienna, Austria in 1924, between two world wars that shaped her core values and world view.

Eva's father Arthur and mother Gertrude focused on educating their children and running an agribusiness founded by her grandfather and great uncle. They worked with scientists at the University of Vienna to develop better seeds, farming practices, and pest control. When Arthur died of cancer in 1934 at age 33, ten year old Eva watched and learned as her mother and aunt took over the family business.

With Hitler's 1938 annexation, the Low family left the country, moving briefly in Switzerland and then for two years in England. Eva's mother did not waste her time talking about the past. Her steady, reliable nature and practical, calm attitude clearly had an impact on Eva. "We were expected to deal with what we had to deal with, and to do it in the best way we thought," reflected Eva. "We never discussed what might have been."

Because of her academic preparation abroad, Eva entered Radboud at age 16, earning her B.S. in Chemistry in 1944. In 1947, Eva was amongst the first women to earn a Ph.D. in Chemistry at Yale University. At Yale Eva met the love of her life, Vincent Verplanck. They studied each other in chemistry lab and became friends. After several months, the competitive couple made a bet: whoever earned the higher grade on the next chemistry exam would get a free dinner at a fine restaurant. Looking back, Eva realized that not only did she get a free dinner, it became their first date.

After graduation, Eva served as a Yale postdoctoral fellow and research instructor until 1951. Eva and Vince married on August 26, 1950, relocated to Wilmington and later to Kennett. While Vince worked as a chemist at Hercules, Eva conducted research at the Academy of Natural Sciences under the esteemed botanist and lepidopterist Ruth Patrick, Ph.D.

In 1958, Eva stepped aside from her science career to raise her growing family. Anne was born in 1958 and Philip in 1965. High energy Eva increased her community involvement. Her detailed, scientific nature led Eva to study nonprofit financing, fundraising, strategic planning, and governance in great depth. Her powers of observation led her to refine her astute understanding of human nature, team interaction, and group decision-making. Early on Eva realized the dire need for volunteers to overcome personal hesitancy and become involved in fundraising. Eva became a fundraising advocate, mentor, and role model.

When Eva's beloved husband Vince died from stroke complications in 1986 at age 62, Eva immersed herself in nonprofit boards:

- YWCA of New Castle County DE (since 1963); YWCA of the USA (1976-1988); YWCA USA World Service Council (since 1988)
- United Way of Delaware (1975-1988); U/W S. Chester County (2005-2011)
- Trustees of Color
- Quintin E. Primo Lecture Series (1999-2012)
- Planned Parenthood of Chester County/SE PA (since 1987)
- Neighborhood Health Agencies & Chester County Council of Home Health Agencies (1981-1995)
- Kennett Area Park Authority (since 1988)
- Christ Church Christiana Hundred
- Chester County Community Foundation (since 1999)
- Brandywine Red Clay Alliance (since 1987)

As Co-Chair of YWCA Delaware's Financial Development Committee, Eva advocated for after school programs, food pantry, shelter, non-traditional job training, write in residence programs, and study circles on racism with Dr. Maya Angelou and Rev. Bernice King. In 1984, the Association of Fundraising Professionals recognized Eva with the Lifetime Achievement Award, in great part due to her fierce dedication to the YWCA's mission. Stephanie Skatts, CEO of the YWCA of Delaware, notes, "Eva was a trailblazer. She was humble about the impact of her personal adversity, but it informed her guidance and inspired others to follow her lead."



By 1999, Eva became a devoted supporter of the Chester County Community Foundation. Due to her stellar service as a Board member and Chair, in 2004 Eva attained Emerita status. Eva often said, "It is, indeed an honor to be an Emerita Board member, to do all the work yet have no title. But I have a voice, and that matters."

The Adler Legacy Fund honoring Eva L. Verplanck, Ph.D. was established in 2006 by naming West Chester University President and longtime friend, Madeline Wing Adler, Ph.D. These two strong leaders share a birthday and a passion for community philanthropy. Madeline reflects, "Eva was consistently attentive to the big picture, resources and detail. Eva was tireless in her quest to make our world a better place forever."

In 2008, Eva was honored by the Dr. Henry R. and Barbara M. Jordan Award to recognize her outstanding, longstanding community leadership.



In her last few years, Eva's eyesight started to fail. To her great frustration, "Eagle Eye Eva" saw more with her heart and her mother's eye. She continued to attend meetings and network at events, until the role of falls became too great.



Until her last days, Eva answered calls and a made from charity leaders, imparting thoughtful, practical, wise counsel. Eva's great intellect, scientific attention to detail, powerful skills of observation, and deep emotional intelligence were second to none. Eva leaves an impressive legacy—a life and legacy to be celebrated.

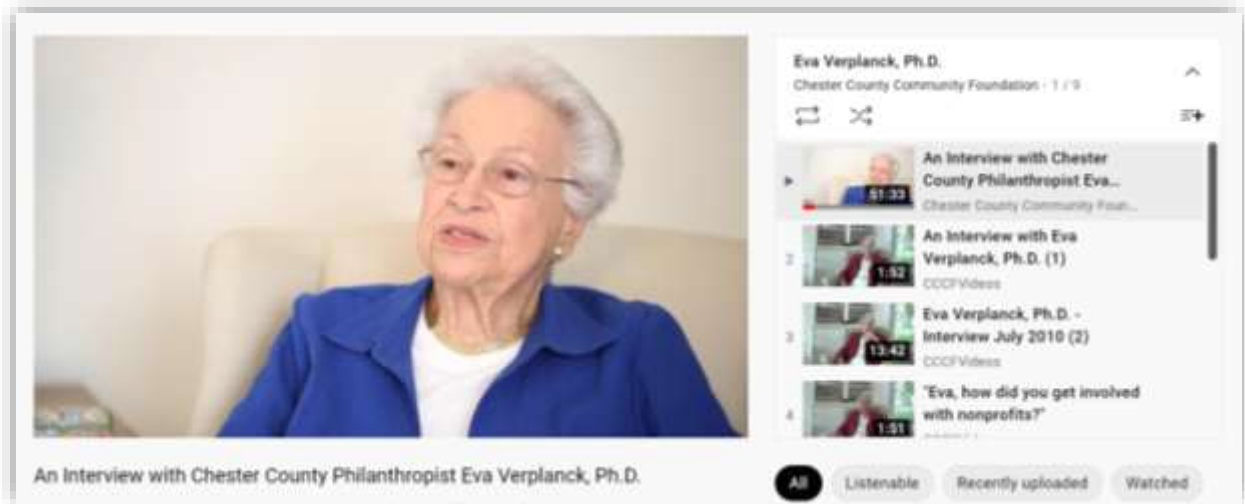
Note #1: Low family history per The Ultimate Engineer: The Remarkable Life of NASA's Warning Leader George W. Low. Biography of George W. Low by Richard Cook, reprinted by permission by Eric. Link: <http://www.eric.org>, 2019.

Note #2: Ruth Douglas Anne is an Associate Professor of American Studies & Heritage Studies at West Chester University. Ruth was WCU's a researcher with the U.S. Geological Survey in Dublin, OH. The legacy continues.

- YWCA of Delaware; YWCA of New Castle County; YWCA of the USA World Service Council; since 1962
- United Ways of Delaware (1979-1988); SE PA; and Southern Chester County
- Visiting Nurses Association (1986-1995)
- Trustees of Color
- Quintin E. Primo Lecture Series
- Planned Parenthood of SE PA (since 1993)
- Neighborhood Health Agencies
- Kennett Area Park Authority (since 1988)
- Christ Church Christiana Hundred
- Chester County Community Foundation (since 1999)
- Chester Council of Home Health Agencies (1988-1990)
- Brandywine Red Clay Valley Alliance (since 1987)

 **YouTube** → tinyurl.com/ChesCoCF

Playlist entitled “Eva Verplanck, Ph.D.”



Visit our highlight video of Eva’s Life Celebration, online:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DENpAal_Kto&list=PLSJ-z0OpQDepyWE0Kpyfot53k9xi4NtXK&index=10