

Allen C. Myers (1945–2020), longtime Eerdmans editor

Longtime Eerdmans biblical studies editor Allen C. Myers [died](#) early on Thanksgiving morning, November 26, 2020, following numerous months of declining health. A private (because of COVID-19 restrictions) [memorial service](#) was held Friday, December 4, at Trinity United Methodist Church of Grand Rapids, MI.

A native of Ohio, Allen earned degrees at Otterbein University and United Theological Seminary before undertaking graduate studies with David Noel Freedman and George Mendenhall at the University of Michigan. After completing his course work there, he accepted a temporary position at Eerdmans—a temporary position that became a distinguished and bounteously fruitful career.

Many authors and friends of Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing over the last half-century came to know Allen through his attendance at academic conferences and his work on reference works, commentaries, and numerous other books, especially in Hebrew Bible, ancient Near Eastern studies, and early Judaism. Allen, more than any other individual, deserves credit for the outstanding list of books published by Eerdmans in those areas from the mid-seventies onward. He took over and managed long-running projects like the [New International Commentary on the Old Testament](#) and the [Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament](#). He both initiated and completed others, like the [Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible](#) (in collaboration with David Noel Freedman, Astrid Beck, and many contributors). Yet others that he initiated are en route to full flower (such as the [Illuminations](#) commentary series).

Allen's Eerdmans colleagues and those who saw him at the annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Academy of Religion, the American Schools of Oriental Research, the Catholic Biblical Association, the Society of New Testament Studies, and other organizations also got to know his wife, Janice ("Jann"), whom he met early in his tenure at Eerdmans. Jann worked in the marketing department. For many years she orchestrated the Eerdmans presence at our largest annual conference (the SBL-AAR meeting), and they attended many other conferences together as well. She was his faithful caretaker during his last days.

Allen's longtime colleague Jon Pott, who was editor-in-chief at Eerdmans for roughly as many years as Allen was the company's resident Old Testament expert, says, "I don't know of any editor more respected in his field than Allen has been for decades. Very senior scholars would often mention to me how much they appreciated working with him." He had, as Jon notes, "a slyly wicked but never malicious sense of humor." Jon also notes—and I myself observed—something pastoral about his manner.

His manner seemed pastoral in part because he was centered and quiet in what appeared to me to be a Psalm 131:2 sense. In a world that increasingly presses us all to say too much, to say more than we know, Allen practiced the virtue of saying less than he knew. After I succeeded Jon as editor-in-chief at Eerdmans, I sometimes begged Allen to voice his judgment regarding a book proposal in our acquisitions meetings. The rest of us were generally all too ready to speak our minds. I came to appreciate Allen's reticence. Proverbs tells us that Wisdom cries aloud in the public square. Yes, but Allen knew, and exemplified for us, that Wisdom is often slow to speak, and sometimes adamantly holds her peace.

Jann and Allen both [retired in 2016](#). They have been missed at Eerdmans, and I know that many authors and readers will miss him sorely as well. His memory already is, and long will be, לְבִרְכָה—for a blessing. May he rise in peace and rest in glory.

—James Ernest