

Obituaries



H. Sherwood Lawrence, M.D.

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H. Sherwood Lawrence, M.D. ('43), a distinguished faculty member, researcher, clinician, and administrator whose tenure at the School of Medicine spanned more than half a century, died on April 5. He was 87.

Dr. Lawrence graduated from New York University in 1938 and NYU School of Medicine in 1943. Before completing his residency at Bellevue Hospital, where he was chief resident, he served as a lieutenant in the Medical Corps of the U.S. Naval Reserve during World War II.

Dr. Lawrence joined the faculty of the School in 1947 and was appointed the Jeffrey Bergstein Professor of Medicine in 1979. He served in many senior positions, including Director of the Division of Infectious Diseases and Immunology (a position he held for 40 years until his retirement in 2000), Co-Director of Medical Services at Bellevue Hospital and NYU Hospitals, Director of the NYU Cancer Center, and Director of the NIH-designated Center for AIDS Research.

Dr. Lawrence was a pioneering immunologist who helped found the branch of biology that explores the function of lymphocytes. His research generated numerous advances in immunology. He achieved particular renown for his discovery, in 1949, of a substance known as "transfer factor." This substance, a product of T-lymphocytes, confers specific immunity against a wide variety of infectious agents. A member of the National Academy of Sciences, Dr. Lawrence was the founder and editor in chief of the journal *Cellular Immunology*. He is survived by his wife, Dorothea, their three children—Dorothea, Victor, and Geoffrey—and four grandchildren. ■

Benjamin van Duuren, M.D.

Benjamin van Duuren, M.D., a pioneering cancer researcher who identified carcinogenic chemicals in cigarettes and was partly responsible for the warning label placed on cigarette packages, died on November 13. He was 77.

Born in South Africa, Dr. van Duuren received his Sc.D. (Doctor of Science) in chemistry from the University of South Africa. After doing post-doctoral research with Nobel Laureate Donald Cram at UCLA, he joined NYU's Nelson Institute of Environmental Medicine in 1955, rising to the rank of Professor. Before retiring in 1991, he served as Associate Director of the institute, as well as Director of its Laboratory of Organic Chemistry in Carcinogenesis.

Soon after cigarette smoking was identified as a major cause of lung cancer in the 1950s, Dr. van Duuren began fractionating cigarette tars and isolated 21 aromatic hydrocarbons, six of which were shown to cause cancer. In the 1960s, he and his researchers found many important "structure-activity relationships" of chemicals

found in cigarette tars. His research made it possible to predict which chemicals might be carcinogens based on their molecular structure.

Dr. van Duuren was a consultant to numerous agencies engaged in cancer research, including the National Institutes of Health, the National Research Council, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Justice, and the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer. He is survived by his wife, Satloo Gurbaxani. ■

Robert J. Soberman, M.D.

Robert J. Soberman, M.D. ('51), Professor of Medicine and Associate Dean for Post-Graduate Programs at the NYU Post-Graduate Medical School, died on April 26. Dr. Soberman's career at NYU spanned more than 50 years. After earning his M.D. from NYU School of Medicine, he completed his internship and residency at Bellevue Hospital. He joined the faculty of the School in 1951, rising to the rank of Professor in 1994.

A prominent figure in nephrology since the early days of transplant surgery, Dr. Soberman specialized in kidney and pancreas transplantation, and helped develop the national regulations for fair organ procurement and distribution. He was the Senior Transplant Physician for NYU Medical Center's Transplant Program from 1990 until his death.

As part of his enduring commitment to medical education, Dr. Soberman first developed the School of Medicine's modern Office of Continuing Medical Education, and then helped to strengthen programs for physicians to gain new skills throughout their careers. He is survived by his wife, Beatrice, and three children, Roy, Diane, and Nina. ■