

Obituaries



Irwin M. Freedberg, M.D.

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Irwin M. Freedberg, M.D., the George Miller MacKee Professor of Dermatology and Chairman of the Ronald O. Perelman Department of Dermatology

since 1981, died on July 17. He was 74.

One of the leaders of American medicine, Dr. Freedberg had a distinguished career that spanned nearly 50 years. He spent nearly half of his career at NYU, presiding over one of the oldest, largest, and most renowned dermatology departments in the country. He himself once proudly called it “the most significant dermatologic chair in the United States and perhaps the world.” During his 24-year tenure, Dr. Freedberg guided the department through an extraordinary period of growth in molecular and cell biology, genetics, and immunology.

Born in Boston, Dr. Freedberg was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Dartmouth College and an Alpha Omega Alpha graduate of Harvard Medical School. He trained in Medicine at Boston’s Beth Israel Hospital and in Dermatology at the Massachusetts General Hospital. He later served on the faculties of Harvard Medical School and the Johns

Hopkins Medical Institutions, where he served as founding Chairman of Dermatology.

Dr. Freedberg was also an outstanding physician-scientist, whose pioneering research on keratins, the proteins produced by the epidermis, won him pre-eminence in the field of dermatology. He served as Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* and as Chief Editor of the two most recent editions of the major American textbook of dermatology, *Dermatology in General Medicine*.

A member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, Dr. Freedberg had been President of the Society for Investigative Dermatology, the American Board of Dermatology, the Association of Professors of Dermatology, and the American Dermatologic Association.

He is survived by his wife, Irene, and their three children, Marjorie, Kenneth, and Deborah. ■

Zoltan Ovary, M.D.

Zoltan Ovary, M.D., a legendary immunologist whose pioneering work established fundamental principles underlying the development of allergies, died on June 12. He was 98.

Dr. Ovary’s career in the Department of Pathology spanned 47 years, and during his lifetime the study of immunology evolved into a powerful and influential field in modern biology. His landmark experiments and methods laid the groundwork for many of the seminal concepts that have emerged in the study of allergies.

Dr. Ovary was born in Kolozsvár, Hungary (now part of Romania). He received his M.D. from the University of Paris in 1935 and came to the U.S. as a Research Fellow in microbiology at Johns Hopkins in 1954. In 1959 he joined NYU as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pathology, rising to Professor in 1964. Dr. Ovary belonged to a group of renowned immunologists at the School of Medicine, including Nobel laureate Dr. Baruj Benacerraf, Lewis Thomas and Edward Franklin, who were devoted to the arts. He initiated the School’s Artist-in-Residence program, and in his memoir he described his passion for the arts and the friendships he established with scientists and artists worldwide. ■

Stanford Wessler, M.D.

Stanford Wessler, M.D. (’42), a distinguished faculty member, researcher, clinician, and administrator, died on January 12. He was 87.

Dr. Wessler graduated from Harvard University in 1938. After completing his internship at Albany Hospital, he served as a captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps. He later served as a research fellow at Harvard Medical School and completed his residency at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston.

Dr. Wessler joined NYU in 1974, serving as Professor of Medicine and Associate Dean for Post-Graduate Programs at the NYU Post-Graduate School of Medicine until his retirement in 1990. He had previously served as Physician-in-Chief of the Jewish Hospital of St. Louis and Director of the Thrombosis Center of the National Heart and Lung Institute at Washington University School of Medicine.

One of the world’s leading authorities on heparin, an anti-clotting medication, Dr. Wessler proposed in 1974 that administering low doses of the drug before surgery could reduce the risk of fatal clots that form in the veins of the leg. That practice is now widely used in pre-operative care. Dr. Wessler is survived by his sons—John, Stephen, and James. ■