In Memoriam

Richard Joel Traystman, PhD

Michael A. Moskowitz, MD; Patrician D. Hurn, PhD; Costantino Iadecola, MD

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of our cherished colleague and pioneering stroke researcher Richard Joel Traystman, PhD, on October 19, 2017. Dick was beloved by members of the stroke community and was a trusted and treasured friend to many. In addition to his talents as an accomplished investigator, Dick was widely respected for his consummate skills as a mentor and administrator. He was also a man of great passion, especially for his can-do-more philosophy. Those of us who knew him cherished him for his enormous generosity and compassion, as well as sense of humor and wit. His colleagues marveled at his dedication, energy, and commitment to the mission, stroke research. A born leader, Dick Traystman gave tirelessly and unselfishly right up to the weeks before his passing. He leaves behind a very large legacy at all 3 institutions that he touched including Johns Hopkins, University of Oregon, and University of Colorado.

A native of New York, Dr Traystman received his PhD and postdoctoral training from Johns Hopkins University and Bowman Gray School of Medicine, respectively. He then joined the faculty at Johns Hopkins University where he rose through the ranks (and more) to become University Distinguished Research Professor and Vice Chair for research in the Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine in 1989. In 2003, Dr Traystman became Associate Vice President for Research Planning and Development at Oregon Health and Science University, and Professor of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine. In 2007, he assumed the chair as Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medical Campus and held the title of Distinguished University Professor and Professor in the Departments of Pharmacology, Anesthesiology, Emergency Medicine, and Neurology.

Dick was among the first to successfully integrate basic science and clinical medicine in a clinical department, today a key part of translational medicine. Dick's vision helped to fill a large void by uniting PhD students and faculty with medical staff to attack problems of clinical relevance. One such problem concerned the impact of cardiac arrest/CPR on cerebrovascular control and outcome. He was the first to examine in adult animals the effects on cerebral blood vessels of alterations in chest compression, duty cycles of compression, use of simultaneous chest compression ventilation, and use of a variety of pharmacological agents. He also examined these parameters in newborn and juvenile animals, and because of his efforts particularly in newborns, the American Heart Association used the findings from Dick's laboratory to formulate new clinical guidelines. Stemming from this work came an entire area of research focusing on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation and its effect on the cerebral vasculature in young animals. Dick's laboratory made seminal contributions to this research area as well.

In addition to a long and distinguished career in the study of brain blood flow and cerebrovascular regulation in health and disease, Dick's research interests are remarkable for their breadth and application to the adult, juvenile, and pediatric brain; his laboratory findings appear in more than 475 scientific publications. These include the study of neurogenic regulation of cerebral vessels, effects of vessel occlusions on brain pathology, and neural functional behavior, as well as neuroprotection with a variety of pharmacological agents and methodologies. His work on the cerebrovascular effects of baroreflexes, chemoreflexes, and arterial pressure or hypoxia has become classic and is regularly featured in graduate-level physiology texts. He has also contributed substantially to our understanding of how the brain and its circulation respond to

From the Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston (M.A.M.); University of Michigan School of Nursing, Ann Arbor (P.D.H.); and Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, NY (C.I.).

Correspondence to Michael A. Moskowitz, MD, Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA. E-mail moskowit@helix.mgh.harvard.edu

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disease states, such as hypoglycemia, acidosis, hyperammonemia, intracranial hypertension, ischemic stroke, and cardiac arrest. His work on the role of gender and sex hormones in stroke and his studies concerning the normal and pathophysiological responses of the brain in juvenile and adult animals has been trendsetting and stimulated great interest in this field. In short, his contributions for which he will be remembered helped foster scientific breakthroughs in pediatric as well as adult stroke and critical care medicine.

Dick was tireless in his contributions to the work of organizations, such as American Stroke Association–American Heart Association and International Society for Cerebral Blood Flow and Metabolism, among others. He served as President of that Society from 2014 to 2016 and as Editor in Chief of the Journal of Cerebral Blood Flow and Metabolism from 2003 to 2009. He served as Chairman of numerous committees for the American Stroke Association and American Heart Association and was a member of several others. He was a member of numerous editorial boards including Stroke, Applied Physiology, and Circulation Research. In all these roles, Dr Traystman always demonstrated exceptional dedication, integrity, as well as excellent judgment; his tireless efforts have undoubtedly contributed to the success of these organizations through the years.

For his exceptional contributions, Dick received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society for Blood Flow and Metabolism, the American Heart Association Distinguished Scientist, the Excellence in Research from both the American Society of Anesthesiology, as well as the Society of Critical Care Medicine. In 2004, he received the Thomas Willis award—the highest recognition in stroke research bestowed by the American Stroke Association–American Heart Association. And this is just a partial list.

Dick will long be revered for his mentoring of both translational and clinician scientists in training. His list of trainees is long, with over 100 fellows, students, and junior faculty that he supported in their own quest for excellence. He is remembered by them with respect and huge affection because of his unique, highly personal style as a mentor. He worked incredibly hard to give his students the tools they needed to excel. That might entail pouring over grant applications or manuscripts line-by-line or spending hours teaching the best way to verbally present data, field questions, and excel at public speaking. As a student of his recounted, “I can remember being amazed that he took chapters of my PhD thesis on his annual summer beach vacation and actually read them all. I could tell by the sand in the binders that held those precious papers in place!” Dick worked late at night and on weekends to make sure that his comments and advice reached the recipient quickly and effectively. With his bottomless work ethic, he reminded those under his supervision that success does not come without stress and a drive to be the best. He was known for his ability to be blunt in his opinions and counsel. Yet, his warm sense of humor and personal charm always balanced that critical eye. He cared deeply about his protégés and shared so much of himself with each learner. Dick was also a master scientific collaborator and leader of people. And he taught each trainee how to do likewise. He brought diverse groups of people together to accomplish important work, somehow making individual agendas, egos, and contrasting personal styles blend into true team science. Finally, and most strikingly, Dick never missed an opportunity to shout out the accomplishments of his mentees. He wrote amazing letters of reference and would spend hours on the phone with a search committee, providing a detailed argument about why his candidates were the best and the brightest in the field. He was a big and generous man: in head, heart, and friendship. We will all miss him.

Dick was devoted to his loving wife and partner in life of 28 years, Suzann Lupton. To Suzann, we and the entire stroke community extend our deepest sympathies.

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