IN MEMORIAM

Dr Leonard David Kohn (1935-2012)

After a long-lasting struggle with major health problems Dr Leonard D. Kohn (Len) died on April 18, 2012. Len never lost his temper and constitutive optimism defining the condition as his "medical cruise". I could hardly think of somebody else who could, like he did, pursue his goals in Science and entrepreneurship, fighting off impending diseases.

Len graduated from Columbia College and the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York where he did 3 years of internship-residency at NY Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. He joined the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 1964. He started off as an enzymologist in the Laboratory of Biochemistry and Metabolism of the then National Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases (NIAMD). In the early 1970's he moved to the field of experimental Endocrinology and in 1975 became Section Chief in the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). His work has contributed significantly to the understanding of the cellular and biochemical properties of the TSH receptor and the development of innovative approaches to the treatment of Graves' and other autoimmune diseases. His laboratory has been a magnet for scores of junior and senior investigators from all over the world. I joined Len's lab in 1975 and we kept in close contact ever since. Undoubtedly, my association with him has affected my personality like no other previous or subsequent experience.

In the early 1980's, Len was the driving force in the creation of the Interthyr Research Foundation (IRF). The intent was to patent and to commercialize assays to measure functional thyroid stimulating autoantibodies in Graves' patients. The patents were licensed to several companies and the funds generated were used by IRF to promote and support endocrine research in many countries. In 2003 he became the John Edward Watson Chair of Diabetes Research at the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine (OUCOM). At that time, the Interthyr Research Corporation (IC) was established and Len became its President. He retired from OUCOM to become Emeritus in 2008 and to serve full time as President of IC.

Len published more than 400 papers, mostly in experimental Endocrinology, issued 9 patents, and more than 20 pending patent applications. His work at Ohio University contributed significantly in the attainment of funding for the construction of a multi-million dollar Academic Research and Teaching Facility opened in 2010, and to the establishment of the Diabetes-Cardiovascular Clinical Research Centre, which was cited by the State of Ohio for its excellence.

Dr Kohn received numerous professional awards in recognition of research carried out under his leadership, including the Ingbar Award from the American Thyroid Association and the *Laurea Honoris Causa* in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Chieti, in Italy. He has been corresponding member of the ETA since 1975.

Len has been inspirational to a multitude of young investigators. Far more important than his contribution to the biomedical Sciences, his exceptional drive, his intelligence and unabated optimism were contagious for the many who have had the fortune of working with him. He was exceptionally gifted in turning young doctors, with limited laboratory experience, into first-class scientists in the fields of endocrinology and molecular and cell biology.

In my mind and in my heart, Len has symbolized knowledge, wit, optimism, courage, and that is the picture of him that should be remembered.

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