



## In Memoriam: Dr. Robert N. Taylor MD, PhD

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Rob was a close colleague, collaborator, and indeed, mentor (despite our closeness in age). We met at a Tox Talks meeting in the mid 1990s, and continued our interactions and discussions at many subsequent Tox Talks and other scientific meetings, over collaborative grant initiatives and while working together on the textbook, Chesley's Hypertensive Disorders in Pregnancy. It was in the first Tox Talk meeting that I initially witnessed the tremendous breadth and depth of Dr. Taylor's knowledge in preeclampsia and beyond as illustrated by his penetrating questions of the speakers, which challenged us all to think outside of the conventional wisdom. Over the many years of our interactions, I grew to deeply respect his expertise and accomplishments in a multitude of disciplines in Women's Reproductive Health including endometriosis, endometrial decidualization, placental biology, preeclampsia and steroid biochemistry. Dr. Taylor published over 300 works encompassing these research areas!

Though Rob was especially interested in and excited by cellular and molecular mechanisms underlying physiological and pathophysiological reproductive processes, his eyes never wavered from the bigger picture. As one example, he was expert in the entire timespan of pregnancy beginning before conception with reproductive endocrinology and endometrium, followed by placental development and function, and ending with pregnancy outcomes including pathologies especially preeclampsia. His knowledge in this broad scientific and clinical arena was truly encyclopedic in scope. Indeed, Rob saw this bigger picture of pregnancy as nobody else did and started to connect many of the dots necessary to unveil the genesis of adverse maternal and neonatal pregnancy outcomes like preeclampsia. The loss of Dr. Taylor will not only be profoundly felt in the discipline of women's health care research, but also

in patient-care and medical education, having set the standards of excellence as an astute clinician, and enthusiastic and committed educator of the next generation of physician scientists.

Rob was one of the most intelligent persons I knew. Whenever I needed consultation on issues too complex for me to completely grasp or outside of my comfort zone, Dr. Taylor was the first person I reached out to. Similarly, he was my first choice as a "sounding board" for any new and different ideas. Despite his busy life, he always found the time to meet! Perhaps most remarkable was Rob's extraordinary kindness, warmth, sensitivity, generosity and humility. Indeed, he was especially humble, and also possessed a great sense of humor that arose in part from the irony he astutely observed in so many events transpiring around the world and in life.

Rob's measurable impact on reproductive medicine was profound not only because of his own work, but because he trained and mentored so many others who have gone on to do research. For example, my colleague, Valerie Baker worked in Rob's lab as both an OB/GYN resident and a REI clinical fellow. She fondly recalls his scientific brilliance, wit, and humor. Dr. Taylor introduced the two of us in 2007, launching the stimulating, productive and gratifying collaboration we have enjoyed over the years. We are forever indebted to Rob for having the imagination, wisdom and foresight to arrange this meeting which, in fact, befittingly exemplifies one of his most admirable qualities of valuing the wellbeing and success of others even above his own.

Rob Taylor was special, and the kind of human being we wish for and need in this world; he was a force of pure good always helping others. My heart weeps for the untimely and tragic death of Rob. My deepest condolences to his family.

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