In Memoriam: Dr. Bruce Stoker

Bruce A.D. Stocker, M.D., Professor Emeritus Active, Microbiology and Immunology, died August 30, 2004 at the age of 87. Drs. Leon Rosenberg and Gary Schoolnik, colleagues of Dr. Stoker, have informed me that he worked actively in his laboratory until three months before his death pursuing scientific questions he had first begun to study in the early 1950’s. Following medical school and a stint with the British Army in India, he undertook a life-long study of Salmonella which culminated in a series of elegant reports describing how bacterial flagella work, how their expression is regulated, their relationship to virulence, and ultimately, how they can be used to construct living attenuated vaccines for the prevention of a variety of human and animal infections and cancers.

On a more personal note, Dr. Schnoolnik has offered the following reflection “Bruce was as pure a scientist as I have yet encountered. He pursued science without concern for personal fame or money. He was ruthlessly objective. He stayed with the same basic question for over half a century--taking it to deeper levels. His brilliance, which did not shine quite so brightly recently (some of you may have joined the lab too recently to have experienced it), was clear to all of us who knew him for a longer time and from his original contributions. Please keep in mind his values, which are unfortunately not so common today, even in academia. I believe they are the right values. Please also reflect on what it means to age as a scientist and, as Bruce demonstrated, the ability of scientific investigation to sustain intellectual growth and an active life even into the ninth decade”.

There will be a memorial service for Dr Stoker on September 19th at 2:00 pm at the Stanford Faculty Club. A lectureship in microbial pathogenesis is being established to honor the memory of Dr. Stocker at the School of Medicine. Memorial gifts to the lectureship may be sent to the Office of Medical Development, Stanford University Medical Center, 2700 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025, and checks should be made payable to “Stanford University”.