



IN MEMORIAM

Sherman Mellinkoff
Professor of Medicine
UC Los Angeles
1920-2016

Dr. Sherman Mussoff Mellinkoff, who transformed the fledgling UCLA School of Medicine during his 24-year tenure as dean into a nationally recognized academic institution, died of congestive heart failure on July 17 at his home in Westwood. He was 96.

Under Mellinkoff's direction, the school grew from its inaugural class of 28 students to include 1,500 interns, residents and fellows, almost 200 master's and doctoral candidates, and 3,000 alumni. The faculty quadrupled to 1,200 full-time members; the school's budget burgeoned from \$15 million to over \$180 million; and the school established multiple organ transplant programs, a comprehensive cancer center and one of the first federally funded facilities for positron emission tomography, or PET, research.

When Mellinkoff assumed the deanship in 1962 at the age of 42, the school was barely a decade old. Students attended lectures in a lounge in the UCLA Religious Conference Building and researchers worked in temporary Quonset huts while construction crews built the Center for Health Sciences to permanently house the medical school, which launched in 1951, and the hospital, which opened in 1955.

Mellinkoff was born on March 23, 1920, in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. He was the third of four children born to Albert and Helen Mellinkoff, Ashkenazi Jews of Russian-Polish descent. His father worked as a sales clerk and his mother as a bookkeeper at a shoe

store in Pittsburgh. Shortly after Mellinkoff's birth, his family moved to Los Angeles, where his father opened his own business, Mellinkoff's Rite-Fit Shoe Co. — which he fortuitously sold before the stock market crash in 1929.

Mellinkoff served a two-year stint in the U.S. Army medical corps, achieving the rank of captain. After completing his residency at Johns Hopkins University in 1947, he pursued a gastroenterology fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania, and then returned to Johns Hopkins as chief resident in 1951.

UCLA recruited Mellinkoff to his first faculty post in 1953, just two years after the medical school had opened its doors. In 1962, UCLA Chancellor Franklin Murphy asked the young professor to take the helm as the school's second dean.

Under Mellinkoff's direction, the school exploded in size and stature. He recruited a dazzling array of scientists and clinicians whose achievements formed the foundation for UCLA's rising reputation. Colleagues credit his sharp eye for talent, gift of persuasion and unwavering support for faculty as the keys to his longevity and success.

During his tenure, the school excelled in both research and clinical practice, developing renal, bone marrow, heart and liver transplant programs. Seven faculty members were elected to the National Academy of Sciences, and UCLA scientists made major discoveries in tissue typing, organ transplantation and neuroscience. The National Institutes of Health funded one of the first PET research centers at UCLA, and the National Cancer Institute designated UCLA as a comprehensive cancer center.

Under his leadership, the medical campus expanded to include the Neuropsychiatric Institute; Jules Stein Eye Institute; Brain Research Institute; Reed Neurological Research Center; Marion Davies Children's Center; and the Doris and Louis Factor Health Sciences Building, which houses the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, plus new schools of dentistry, public health and nursing. In 1987, construction began on a suite of outpatient offices at 100 UCLA Medical Plaza.

Reflecting his deep commitment to educating the next generation of physicians and providing care to the medically underserved, Mellinkoff initiated a partnership between the School of Medicine and the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science to train medical students to serve low-income patients in South Los Angeles. He forged a program that enabled UC Riverside pre-med students to expedite their education by taking advantage of UCLA's clinical training resources to graduate with a UCLA medical degree.

He also established an M.D./Ph.D. training program funded by the National Institutes of Health. In addition to affiliations with two local Veteran Affairs hospitals and Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Mellinkoff created new clinical rotation sites by affiliating with Olive View-UCLA Medical Center and the Venice Family Clinic.

After retiring in 1986, Mellinkoff took a yearlong sabbatical to travel, and then returned to UCLA to teach medicine as the first recipient of a \$1 million endowed professorship privately funded in his name by friends.

Mellinkoff was a member of the National Academy of Sciences, vice president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a fellow of the United Kingdom's Royal College of Physicians. He held honorary doctorate degrees from two universities and received multiple awards from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Mellinkoff is survived by two children, Albert and Sherri Mellinkoff.