



IN MEMORIAM

William F. Friedman
Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
David Geffen School of Medicine
UC Los Angeles
1936–2005

The David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and the medical profession lost a gifted leader and cardiology research pioneer when Dr. William F. Friedman, former executive chairman of the Pediatric Department and senior associate dean for academic affairs, died on August 25, 2005. He was 69.

A native New Yorker, Bill earned his undergraduate degree in 1957 at Columbia College. He received his medical degree from the State University of New York in 1961, where he graduated cum laude. During his pediatric residence at John Hopkins Hospital, Bill edited the first modern edition of the Harriet Lane Handbook, a standard text still used by medical students and pediatric residents worldwide. He also researched the link between vitamin D, excess calcium in the blood and narrowing of the aorta. From 1962 to 1967 he worked as a senior investigator and pediatric cardiologist at the National Heart Institute.

Bill was the first pediatrician hired by the newly founded School of Medicine at UC San Diego, where he served as chief of the Division of Pediatric Cardiology and professor of pediatrics. In the early 1970s his laboratory introduced the use of two-dimensional echocardiography, or ultrasound, to the field of pediatric medicine. Considered one of the giants in pediatric cardiology, Bill was a pioneer who introduced modern technologies into the field. His research led to one of the most important therapeutic advances for the care of thousands of premature babies born each year in the United States. In 1972 he demonstrated that medical therapy could prevent the need for cardiac surgery to correct patent ductus arteriosus, a common heart defect in which a large blood vessel remains open abnormally after birth.

In 1979 Dr. Friedman arrived at UCLA, where he devoted the final 26 years of his 40-plus-year career. His vision and hard work enabled the Department of Pediatrics to evolve into one of the top academic pediatric programs in the world. He earned the first endowed professorship in pediatrics. He served as chairman and then executive chairman of the Department of Pediatrics. In 1994 he became a senior advisor to the provost and dean of UCLA School of Medicine, and director of the training program in pediatric cardiology.

Knowledgeable about the appointments and promotion process for UCLA faculty, Dr. Friedman was well-versed in the intricacies of the University of California system. His expertise at resolving complex procedural issues frequently came in handy during his tenure as a senior associate dean for academic affairs for the School of Medicine, which position he assumed in 1997.

Dr. Friedman was recognized by several organizations for his performance in cardiology research, and appointed by former California Governor Pete Wilson in 1994 to the California Medical Board, as well as to the Air Quality Board in 1997. He worked to support multiple health organizations throughout his career including the Society for Pediatric Research, the American Board of Pediatrics, and the American Heart Association. He served on the editorial boards of all the leading cardiology journals, as well as was editor of Pediatric Research and associate editor of Pediatric Annals.

Outside of the workplace, Bill was an avid sports fan. He played basketball for Columbia University and was a proud supporter of UCLA teams. His colleagues recall that he never missed a Bruin basketball game. It was as if he was coaching the team from the second row of the stands.

Bill is survived by his wife of 29 years, Denise; his sons Michael and Jonathan; grandchildren Jasmyn and Acacia; and sister Vivian (Jerry) Portnoy of Baltimore. All of his colleagues, family and friends miss him dearly.

Thomas Klitzner