



IN MEMORIAM

Morton Lee Pearce, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Los Angeles
1920–2004

Morton Lee Pearce was born on August 22, 1920. He graduated from Hyde Park High School in Chicago, Illinois in 1937 and entered the University of Chicago, graduating in 1941 with a bachelor of science in physiology. Lee (as he was known to his friends) entered the University of Chicago School of Medicine in October 1941 and graduated in December 1944. He moved to Los Angeles to become an intern at the Los Angeles County General Hospital in January 1945. In October of 1945 he entered the Internal Medicine Residency Program at the same hospital, completing the program in October 1948.

After finishing his internal medicine training, he moved across town to become an assistant in hematology and a clinical instructor in medicine at the new UCLA Medical School where he remained until June 1951. During these years at UCLA, Lee served as a junior attending physician at Los Angeles County Harbor Hospital and did research with John S. Lawrence, the first chair of medicine at UCLA and William N. Valentine who became the second chair of medicine at UCLA. In these three years he published six original manuscripts, five of them in the premier hematology journal *Blood*. Three of these manuscripts described the radiosensitivity of bone marrow, two focused on histamine, and one on heme synthesis.

In June 1951 Lee changed his field of interest to cardiovascular research and moved to Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine as a fellow in medicine. In 1952 he went to Vanderbilt University School of Medicine as an instructor in medicine. During the two years, July 1951 to June 1953, Lee published two manuscripts on methods for determining cardiac output, both in premier cardiovascular journals, *Circulation* and *Circulation Research*.

In 1953 Lee returned to Los Angeles as an assistant professor of medicine at the UCLA School of Medicine. Three years later he was promoted to associate professor and in 1963 he was promoted to professor. In 1955 Lee became the chief of the Cardiology Section at Wadsworth Veterans' Administration Hospital.

In 1962 he published his first manuscript with Seymour Dayton on the development of a palatable diet high in unsaturated fat. This same year they published a landmark study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on the first controlled clinical trial of a diet high in unsaturated fat. Over the ensuing years, Dayton and Pearce published more than a dozen papers together related to diet and lipids. Their work was among the most important in this field. It is interesting that Sy Dayton was a chief resident in Internal Medicine at UCLA before going to Wadsworth V.A. where he later rose through the ranks to become professor and chair of the Department of Medicine at Wadsworth (now the West Los Angeles Veterans' Administration).

Perhaps the area of Lee's research that gave him the most personal satisfaction was his work on the mechanisms by which heart failure resulted in pulmonary edema. He published a series of manuscripts that elucidated the basic mechanisms and which have stood the test of time.

In 1969, Lee moved to the Westwood campus from Wadsworth as the chief of the Division of Cardiology. In that capacity he mentored another former UCLA chief resident in Internal Medicine, Alan Fogelman. Fogelman and Pearce published papers together in the field of cardiology, as was the case with Sy Dayton. Fogelman became chair of medicine at UCLA in 1992. Lee also published with Ken Shine in the mid-1970s. Ken Shine later became chair of medicine at UCLA and then dean of the School of Medicine. Thus, Lee published original research manuscripts with four of the six chairs of medicine in UCLA's history and with a chair at our major affiliate, Wadsworth. Of these five (Lawrence, Valentine, Dayton, Shine, Fogelman), Lee significantly influenced the careers of the last three. In 1976 Lee received the University of Chicago Alumnus of the Year Award.

Lee retired in 1986 and divided his time between his wife Inger's home in Denmark and the area where his children lived (Palo Alto in Northern California) until his death on March 1, 2004.

Lee was always very proud of his trainees and he was particularly proud of his children. His legacy is one that he would be proud of and he will always be remembered by his trainees, colleagues, friends, and family.

Alan M. Fogelman