



IN MEMORIAM

Charles H. "Tom" Sawyer
Professor of Anatomy, Emeritus
UC Los Angeles
1915 – 2006

Dr. Charles H. "Tom" Sawyer, distinguished emeritus professor of neurobiology at the University of California, Los Angeles, passed away June 20, 2006 at the age of 91. He was a pioneer in the field of neuroendocrinology, his work fostering our understanding of how the brain controls the pituitary gland and reproductive function. His research contributed significantly to the development of effective contraceptives and the management of infertility. His scientific experimentation essentially started the intense study of monamines in neurobiology in terms of normal and pathological brain function. In his early electrophysiological experiments he was among the first researchers to describe REM sleep. Overall, as the hypothesis of the neural control of the pituitary gland became known, the field of neuroendocrinology was born, and Dr. Sawyer can be considered one of the most influential pioneers in this burgeoning field.

In 1951 he was invited by Dr. H.W. Magoun to join the new Department of Anatomy at UCLA, where Dr. Sawyer gave the first lecture at the new UCLA School of Medicine. Dr. Sawyer was one of the founding members of the UCLA Brain Research Institute, and was chairman of the Department of Anatomy at UCLA from 1955 to 1963 and again in 1968. Dr. Sawyer was the recipient of numerous awards including the prestigious Koch Award of the Endocrine Society in 1973. He gave the first Geoffrey Harris Memorial Lecture in India, awarded by the International Neuroendocrine Federation in 1974, received the UCLA Certificate of Teaching Excellence Award in 1976, and won the Hartman Award of the Society for the Study of Reproduction in 1978. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in the Physiology and Pharmacology section in 1980 and received the Henry Gray Award from the American Association of Anatomists in 1984. Dr. Sawyer received the Award of Extraordinary Merit from the UCLA Medical Alumni Association in 1990. During Dr. Sawyer's long research career he published over 350 papers in distinguished medical journals and taught Gross Anatomy to medical students for close to 60 years. Part of Dr. Sawyer's legacy at UCLA is that he initiated an interactive group of investigators studying and training in neuroendocrinology. That legacy still exists in the Laboratory of Neuroendocrinology of the Brain Research Institute, which remains at the forefront of research on the relationship between hormones and brain development and function.

Dr. Sawyer has been recognized for his scientific leadership, his research accomplishments, and his good humor and patience.

Today we celebrate the life of Tom Sawyer – a glowing example of a scientist and a true gentleman.

Paul E. Micevych