



IN MEMORIAM

Arthur Schwabe
Professor of Medicine, Emeritus
Los Angeles
1924 — 2001

To his family and friends, he was a raconteur, a gentleman farmer, and a source of enduring wisdom about medicine, history and life. To his colleagues, he was an eminent researcher in the diagnosis of fat malabsorption and Familial Mediterranean Fever, an inherited disease he greatly illuminated. To his patients, he was the compassionate doctor with the twinkling blue eyes and the quick smile who sat many of them as tots on his knee and later cared for their children and grandchildren.

When Arthur Schwabe died in June 2001, UCLA lost a pillar of the medical school who left his mark on thousands of patients, students, faculty and staff.

Born in Varel, Germany, Art moved to Santa Cruz, California as a youngster when his father recognized the Nazi shadow falling over Europe. As an Army volunteer, Art returned to Europe from 1943 to 1946 and served under fire with distinction as a military intelligence officer. His keen mind, courage and linguistic skills were so prized that he remained overseas well beyond his initial term of duty, aiding in key Nazi interrogations (including Hitler's private pilot) and post- War boundary negotiations.

As a captain in the Army Reserve, Schwabe then returned to UC Berkeley to complete his undergraduate studies. He earned his medical degree and was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha at the University of Chicago. He served his internship and residency at the UCLA Medical Center followed by a year as a U.S. Public Health Service fellow in gastroenterology and a year as chief resident in medicine.

A gifted teaching and research career was launched when Art began his UC faculty tenure as the chief of gastroenterology at Harbor- UCLA Medical Center in Torrance from 1962 to 1967. At the same time he began to develop a method of testing exhaled breath in order to diagnose problems with digestion or intestinal absorption of fats. Schwabe also studied links between fat metabolism and anorexia nervosa.

From 1967 to 1988 he was chief of the UCLA Division of Gastroenterology. During that period he also served as vice chairman, acting chairman and director of House Staff Training for the UCLA Department of Medicine. After retiring from his administrative posts in 1988 and becoming an emeritus professor, he remained an active medical consultant at the Wadsworth VA Hospital and the Harbor- UCLA Medical Center until his death.

In addition to his unparalleled gifts as a bedside physician, his contributions to the understanding of Familial Mediterranean Fever, a painful genetic disease largely affecting people of Jewish, Armenian, Arab and other Mediterranean ancestries, will stand as Art's greatest professional legacy. At UCLA he founded and built the largest and finest Familial Mediterranean Fever Clinic in the western world. Nearly every month until his final illness, Art's presence at UCLA's FMF Clinic enriched students, residents, colleagues and especially patients from California, the U.S. and abroad who sought his diagnostic acumen and counsel regarding management of the disease. Among his more than 100 scientific papers and book chapters, many of his treatises on FMF and other gastrointestinal diseases stand as classics in the field.

Art's teaching talents earned him Golden Apple awards from the senior classes of UCLA Medical School in 1967 and 1970 as well as Outstanding Teacher Award, Distinguished Teaching Award and Teacher of the Year Award from UCLA House Staff in 1968, 1971 and 1978. In 1983, he received the Sherman M. Mellinkoff Faculty Award for excellence in the art of medicine.

Highly respected in national and local professional societies, Schwabe served as president of the Southern California Society of Gastroenterology in 1969 and Chairman of the Western Gut Club the same year. He was also a visiting professor in Mexico, Brazil and Indonesia.

Arthur Schwabe's first wife Margaret, long a charming hostess to Art's students, colleagues and foreign visitors, died of dermatomyositis at a young age. Dr. Schwabe is survived by Erika, his second wife. Erika, now twice widowed, was also a loving helper to Art in his many medical good works.

A memorial service was held for Arthur Schwabe on June 26, 2001 at Forest Lawn followed by a graveside 21- gun salute. At the service, these words were spoken: "Whether the most vulnerable or needy at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center or the sick but affluent, all of Dr. Schwabe's patients loved him." His UCLA colleagues also loved him. We shall always cherish our memories of his time with us.

Terri Getzug
Sherman Mellinkoff
Claire Panosian
Wilfred Weinstein