



IN MEMORIAM

Wilfred Earl Toreson, MD, CM, MS, PhD
Professor of Pathology, Emeritus
UC Davis
1916 - 2008

Wilfred Earl (Fred) Toreson died March 10, 2008 in Sacramento at age 91. He is survived by his wife Mary, his daughter Sigrid, his stepson Greg, one brother and one sister. He was preceded in death by his first wife Dorothy. The University of California lost a quiet leader and a stout advocate who helped to lay the foundations of pathology on two university campuses. At each of his UC leadership appointments, he was asked to oversee the complete review, reorganization, and revitalization of the clinical laboratory service and educational programs. He skillfully guided many changes, in particular the difficult transition of UC Davis from a county hospital to a modern well equipped teaching hospital. He is remembered by family, colleagues, and students as a stately self-effacing man who modestly over the years as he accumulated awards and honors, carefully and without comment placed these mementos in a box and went on with the tasks at hand.

Fred was born December 25, 1916 in McCloud, California, the middle of nine children, the son of a Swedish immigrant who worked in the northern California timber industry. He was encouraged and partially supported by two local doctors to attend University of California- Berkeley where he played saxophone in the UC Marching Band, the UC Symphony and local bands, while working his way through school. One of his greatest joys was playing with the CAL band in the Rose Parade on January 1, 1938 when CAL beat Alabama 13-0 in a rare CAL Rose Bowl win. After he received his bachelor's degree from CAL in 1938, he entered McGill University Medical School in Montreal and received his M.D. and C.M. degrees in 1942. He spent 1943-1946 in the U.S. Army Medical Corps where he rose from Lieutenant to Major as Chief of Laboratory Service at William Beaumont Hospital in El Paso, Texas.

Fred returned to McGill in 1946 where he studied under the eminent pathologist G. Lyman Duff and earned his M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in pathology. His dissertation, "Glycogen infiltration (hydropic degeneration) of the pancreas in diabetes mellitus" in 1951 was one of the initial descriptions of morphological changes in early diabetes. His first faculty position at UCSF (at a salary of less than \$5000/ year) came in 1952 as Director of Pathology Laboratories at Southern Pacific Hospital in San Francisco. Here he became responsible for bringing these laboratories into the UC system.

This began a series of positions in which Fred used his knowledge of clinical laboratory medicine, his organizational skills, and his powers of gentle persuasion to reorganize and develop clinical laboratories, pathology curricula, and computer applications to clinical laboratory medicine. He rose from Instructor to Professor of Pathology at UCSF from 1950 to 1966 and then moved to State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY where he served as Professor of Pathology from 1966-71 and Acting Chair of Pathology from 1968-1969. At SUNY he was Director of Anatomical and Clinical Laboratories and highly respected President of the Faculty Association. There he oversaw the installation of one of the first laboratory computer systems. Also at SUNY, he developed the first Medical Technology Training Program in New York City.

As a faculty leader at UCSF, Fred wrote the position paper that led to the formation of a four year medical school at UC Davis. It is fitting that later in his career, from 1971 to 1983, he should become professor of

pathology at UC Davis and from 1976 to 1977 acting chair of pathology. Fred's remarkable career in laboratory medicine spanned the beginning of laboratory medicine in the electronic age. At William Beaumont Hospital he had to develop his own laboratory tests using colonies of guinea pigs and rabbits. In 1970 he contributed to a landmark symposium on automation and data processing in the clinical laboratory a paper on summaries of patient data produced by magnetic tape typewriter. Later in Brooklyn, he oversaw the installation of one of the nation's first laboratory computer systems

Throughout his career, he shared freely his experiences and insights in medicine and his love of the outdoors. He was famously discovered at Burney Falls by a group of his medical students with a full limit of trout that he was meticulously dissecting to study trout pancreases. The students were treated that night with a fine fish fry and an introduction to diabetes. He was equally noted in pathology conferences for his integration of the biology of the disease with diagnostic pathology.

Fred's love of music was infectious and led many colleagues to operas they would not have considered otherwise. Fly-fishing, caring for his beautiful koi fish, and his rose gardening continued into retirement. His love of fishing, biology, music, and fine foods was interwoven with his concern for the younger generation. He was a signatory to an early petition on global warming and continued his environmental concerns throughout his life. He was an eloquent speaker who developed warm and close relationships with students and trainees. This university will miss greatly these cohesive qualities.