

Obituary

William F. Friedman 1936–2005

AT THE END OF LAST SUMMER, WE ALL LOST ONE of our best. He was Bill Friedman, my teacher, mentor, and friend. William F. Friedman, former executive chairman of the department of pediatrics and senior associate dean for academic affairs at the David Geffen School of Medicine at University of California at Los Angeles, died on August 25 in his home. He was 69.

A gifted physician and researcher, Bill enjoyed a prolific career as a pediatric cardiologist and academic leader that spanned more than 40 years, including 26 years at University of California at Los Angeles. He was a true leader and visionary in the field of pediatric cardiology.

Bill received his undergraduate degree in 1957 from Columbia College, where he played on the varsity basketball team, and his medical degree *cum laude* from the State University of New York in 1961.

In the early 1970s, his laboratory introduced cross-sectional echocardiography to pediatric medicine. During his pediatric residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Friedman edited the first modern edition of the Harriet Lane Handbook, a standard resource still used by medical students and pediatric residents worldwide.

From 1962 through 1967, he had been a senior investigator and paediatric cardiologist at the cardiology branch of the National Heart Institute. While at the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, working in the group headed by Eugene Braunwald, Bill began a series of studies defining the relationship between vitamin D, and unexplained excess calcium in the blood of patients with Williams' syndrome. Bill then moved, in 1968, to the newly founded School of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego, where he was the chief of the Division of Pediatric Cardiology, and professor of pediatrics.

Among his major contributions to our field, Bill published fundamental research observations about fetal and neonatal cardiac function, pharmacological



manipulation of the arterial duct, and he supported my earliest research in ultrasonic imaging.

Bill joined the School of Medicine of University of California at Los Angeles in 1979, and received the first endowed professorship in pediatrics. He served as chairman and then Executive Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics for 15 years. In 1994, he became a senior adviser to the provost and dean, and director of the training program in pediatric cardiology. In 1997, he assumed the position of senior associate dean for academic affairs. He dedicated his leadership talents to numerous organizations, including the Society for Pediatric Research, the American Board of Pediatrics, the American College of Cardiology, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, and the American Heart Association. He served on the editorial boards for all of the leading cardiology journals, and was editor of *Pediatric Research*, and associate editor of *Pediatric Annals*.

During his lifetime, Bill was honoured with an impressive array of awards, including the Cummings

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Award of the American College of Cardiology, and the Distinguished Scientific Achievement Award, the Award of Merit, and the Outstanding Achievement in Cardiovascular Medicine Award, the latter three all from the American Heart Association.

Bill is survived by his wife of 29 years, Denise, his sons Michael and Jonathan, and his extended family of grandchildren, siblings, and their dependents.

On a more personal note, I will close by describing the kind of individual I knew Bill to be. I met him in 1968. I was visiting San Diego primarily for family reasons, but upon the advice of Norman Talner, I went to visit him at the new Medical School at the University of California at San Diego. I did not have an appointment, but we spent 2 hours together talking about his vision for the programme he hoped to build in San Diego. He subsequently became my teacher and mentor. Bill had decided to take on this relatively radical anti-establishment young "hippy", and teach me academic decorum, scientific inquiry, intellectual honesty, discipline and, yes, also Paediatric Cardiology. I was his first fellow, and his surrogate son. His creativity, and energy, were shadowed only by his assertiveness and overbearing personality. He was not then as big in body, but his presence was always enormous. His leadership qualities, manifest both at University of California, San Diego, and in the astounding growth of the Department of Pediatrics at

University of California at Los Angeles after he became Chairman in 1979, were amazing. Bill was the best manager of people I had ever met, incredibly demanding, and unwavering. You always knew what he expected of you, as a fellow, and as a faculty member. His demands for accuracy, clarity, and efficiency in science and writing, like any of his other standards, were not negotiable. It was the choice of each individual whether to undertake to meet his expectations or not. I would always relish visiting with him in his last years as senior Associate Dean at Los Angeles. He would look up and say, "Come give me a hug "boychik", tell me what's up!"

Bill made major contributions to our field, in defining the biology of Williams' syndrome, as well as the natural history of other forms of obstruction of the left ventricular outflow tract, and to our knowledge of pre- and perinatal cardiac physiology, including pharmacologic management of the arterial duct. His sound advice, and the energy which with he delivered it, his engaging presence, joy and good humour among friends, as well as his boisterous and open affection, could not but have a lasting effect on those who knew him. The death of Bill Friedman leaves a vacuum of considerable magnitude, a space that will exist in the room anytime paediatric cardiologists, and specialists in congenital heart specialists gather together.

His first Fellow will always love and respect him.