



Bernard Black-Schaffer

November 22, 1910 - September 26, 2009

Bernard (BC) Black-Schaffer -- Obituary Bernard Schaffer born on November 22, 1910, in New York, NY, the second among four children of Zelig and Nettie (nee Fischman) Schaffer, Bernard came universally to be known as BC (for Big Chief) while he was chief of pathology at Cincinnati's Veterans Affairs Hospital and professor of pathology at the University of Cincinnati's College of Medicine. BC grew up in Newark, New Jersey, becoming the first member of his family to go to college, at City College of New York across the Hudson River. He attended medical school at the University of Vienna, Austria. While there, he met his future wife, Alice-Eugenia (Robin) Black. After completing medical school, BC returned to the United States to train in both clinical medicine and pathology at St. Barnabas Hospital in New Jersey, Cumberland Hospital in New York, Henry Ford Hospital in Michigan and Yale-New Haven Hospital in Connecticut. He went on to assistant professorships in pathology, first at the Medical College of Virginia, then at the Duke University School of Medicine in North Carolina. In 1950, his research into mechanisms of injury due to the effects of radiation led to his call to service in occupied Japan as director of pathology for the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In this position, he was responsible for the Allied investigation into the ongoing effect on their human populations of the atomic bombing of these two cities, which then, only a few years after the bombing, was still unfolding. Much of our present understanding of the human consequences of exposure to nuclear radiation is still based on those

investigations. BC returned to the United States to serve as chief of pathology at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Cincinnati and as associate professor of pathology, subsequently professor, at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. While there, he conducted basic research in a wide range of areas involving health and disease, from the prevention of tooth decay through fluoridation, to investigations extending from the largest mammals, whales, to among the smallest, hamsters. From his detailed study of normal whale hearts, he was able to deduce that endocardial fibroelastosis, a condition that affects some people with enlarged hearts, is a compensatory mechanism that protects cardiac function, rather than a part of the disease process itself. On a grant from the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA), he was able to develop a practical model in hamsters for suspended animation, permitting mammals to be protected from massive acceleration (G) forces, of the magnitude that would be required to blast people into space on interstellar voyages. In addition to his research, he was an enthusiastic and much beloved teacher of medical students in pathology, the course where they are first introduced to what will be the focus of their professional lives: the nature and mechanisms of human disease. In 1967, based on his established expertise in both research and teaching, BC was recruited to the Indiana University School of Medicine, to teach pathology to the combined degree (MD, PhD) students in the Bloomington Medical Sciences Program. He remained there, becoming director of that Program, and retiring as an Emeritus Professor in 1989. He and his beloved wife, Robin of 70 years, continued to live in the Bloomington area thereafter until he passed away, on September 26, 2009, at the Richland Bean Blossom Health Care Center. He leaves his wife, his daughter Dorothy Belcher also of Bloomington, his son Stephen Black-Schaffer of Boston, Massachusetts, as well as three granddaughters, three grandsons, and one great granddaughter. A Celebration of Life will be held 1:00 p.m. Friday, October 2, 2009 at the New Unionville Baptist Church with Rev. Roger Helton officiating. Allen Funeral Home is handling arrangements. Condolences can be made at

www.allenfuneralhome.org.

Tribute Wall

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“ Dear Robin, Children, and Grandchildren,

We send you our great sympathy on the death of your husband, father, and grandfather. It was our pleasure and honor to know BC at the Unitarian Church in Bloomington. While he did not profess a real interest in the church, he always enjoyed talking about religious beliefs and he "bantered" about them very expertly! He was an amazing man, with so many professional accomplishments, and we admired him greatly. We also knew BC (and Robin) at Bell Trace and were sorry to see them move away. We hope that the many wonderful memories you have of BC will sustain you at this most difficult time.

Sincerely,

Harriet and Dick Pfister

Dick and Harriet Pfister - October 26, 2015 at 04:34 PM