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## In Memoriam

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William James's aphorism, "the best use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts life," is inscribed on a plaque awarded to Roland L Weinsier, MD, Dr PH, at a *festschrift* symposium held in his honor on 22 November 2002. Dr Weinsier died on 27 November 2002 at the age of 60 y. Born in Jacksonville, FL, on 22 October 1942 and raised in Orlando, FL, Dr Weinsier received his medical degree from the University of Florida in 1968. He completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at the University of Virginia, after which he earned Masters and Doctoral degrees in Public Health (nutrition) at Harvard University. He then served as a Major in the US Air Force in San Antonio, TX. In 1975, he joined the Division of Nutrition, Department of Medicine, at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). In 1977, he became Director of the Division of Clinical Nutrition in the newly formed Department of Nutrition Sciences. He was promoted to Professor in 1983. From 1988 to 1999 he served as Chairman of the Department of Nutrition Sciences, succeeding the late Charles E Butterworth Jr. In 2000, he stepped down as Chairman to direct UAB's Clinical Nutrition Research Center, which was newly funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

The nutrition science community will remember Roland Weinsier for his leadership in education and his steady stream of research accomplishments. In the 1970s, he began to distinguish himself in patient care and teaching, building the Division of Clinical Nutrition, the Nutrition Clinic, the Nutrition Support Service, and a first-year UAB School of Medicine nutrition course, which for nearly 25 y has been one of the most extensive such courses in any medical school in the United States. Under Dr Weinsier's leadership in the 1980s and 1990s, the Department of Nutrition Sciences was ranked second in the nation in a *US News and World Report* rating of graduate programs and second in funding by the National Institutes of Health. He established a research group focusing on obesity, energy metabolism, and body composition,

through which he further distinguished himself in research and administration. Remarkably, his research productivity expanded significantly during his chairmanship. Until his illness gradually sidelined him in 2002, Dr Weinsier's research during the past 3 y was more vigorous, better funded, more productive, and more enjoyable to him than at any point in his entire career. Of the

> 150 refereed journal articles that he coauthored with almost 300 collaborators, 29 were published in his last 2 y, and it is uncertain whether his research career had even peaked. Without doubt, he planned to continue it for years to come, and his colleagues looked forward to working with him for years to come as well.

Dr Weinsier's 5 most cited publications are listed below (1–5). Some of his early research contributions concerned the nutritional support of hospitalized patients: he documented the prevalence of malnutrition in patients in medical and surgical wards, reported 2 deaths from refeeding syndrome associated with severe hypophosphatemia after the overzealous use of parenteral nutrition, and cataloged the incidence of metabolic complications of parenteral nutrition. He authored 19 reports of educational innovations, such as factors critical to successful medical-nutrition education, a national nutrition test-item bank, and content priorities for teaching nutrition in medical schools. During his career he wrote or contributed

to 16 books or book chapters, including the *Handbook of Clinical Nutrition*, which has sold > 50 000 copies in 3 editions. His greatest contributions, however, were in the areas of obesity, energy metabolism, and body composition. In 1983, he reported the effects of high- and low-energy-density diets on the satiety, energy intake, and eating durations of obese and nonobese subjects. More recent findings focused on inadequate physical activity as the principal cause for the rising prevalence of obesity in the United States and on differences between blacks and whites in body composition and muscle fiber efficiency that could explain their different propensities for obesity. Much of his work questioned the



Roland L Weinsier, MD, Dr PH  
1942–2002

validity of the set-point theory for the etiology of obesity. He summarized this in his Jonathan E Rhoads Honorary Research Lecture for the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN) in 2001 (6).

Dr Weinsier served on 18 committees for federal organizations, including the Federal Trade Commission's Partnership for Healthy Weight Management, the Health Resources and Service Administration, the National Academy of Science's National Research Council, the National Institutes of Health, the US Congress, the US Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Health and Human Services. He served on 23 committees for professional organizations, including The American Society for Clinical Nutrition (ASCN), the American Society for Nutritional Sciences, the American Board of Nutrition (whose certification examination he was responsible for developing for 16 y), the North American Association for the Study of Obesity, the American Heart Association, ASPEN, the International Congress of Obesity, the Intersociety Professional Nutrition Education Consortium, and the American Board of Physician Nutrition Specialists.

Dr Weinsier served the ASCN on its Committee on Medical Nutrition Education from 1984 to 1990. As Chair of that committee from 1987 to 1990, he cofounded the 11-school Southeastern Regional Medical-Nutrition Education Network; organized national conferences, including a consensus conference of 100 medical school nutrition educators and deans on content priorities for medical-nutrition education; and led a national study to identify critical components of effective nutrition training of medical residents. He conceived and led the establishment of the ASCN (later, the ASCN/Dannon Institute) Award for Excellence in Medical/Dental Nutrition Education. From 1996 to 1999 he served as an ASCN Councilor.

Dr Weinsier received many awards, including the Clintec Award for Excellence in the Science of Nutrition from the American College of Nutrition (1988), the CE Butterworth Jr Professorship in Nutrition Sciences from the UAB (1996–1999), the Joseph F Volker Distinguished Faculty Award from the UAB School of Health Related Professions (2000), and the Jonathan E Rhoads Honorary Research Lecturer from ASPEN (2001). For effectiveness in medical-nutrition education, he received the Best Freshman Medical School Professor Award (1981) and the Best Medical Basic Sciences Professor Award from the UAB (1983 and 1987), the ASCN/National Dairy Council Award for Excellence in Medical/Dental Nutrition Education (1995), and the UAB School of Health Related Professions' President's Award for Excellence in Teaching (2000).

To recognize the monumental contributions Dr Weinsier made to nutrition science, education, and clinical practice, a 1-d *festschrift* symposium was held in his honor on 22 November 2002 at the UAB. An international group of renowned physicians and scientists who had collaborated with Dr Weinsier throughout the years made scientific presentations and celebrated his life's work. The proceedings of the *festschrift* will be published in *Obesity Research*.

Although Roland Weinsier's impact on nutrition science and education was substantial, those who knew and worked with him will remember him even more for his outstanding personal qualities. All of his activities were characterized by supreme integrity.

He was a quiet and humble leader who was remarkably effective at motivating others. Never grabbing the limelight for himself, he was a tireless mentor and role model, who always encouraged others along the way and congratulated them on their strengths and successes. His family knew him as an avid gardener, photographer, and accomplished pianist. He treated patients with compassion and discernment. He taught students with a clear eye to what they should learn, not just what he would most like to teach them. In administration, when establishing programs and priorities, when hiring and evaluating faculty and staff, and when submitting reports and managing budgets, he was painstakingly fair, careful to give every rightful reward and quick to encourage.

In remembering him as a humble yet superb leader among nutrition scientists, educators, clinicians, and administrators; a mentor and role model to all; and a kind and generous friend with complete integrity, the nutrition science community has lost a truly great man in Roland Weinsier. Although his family, his friends, his colleagues, and the nutrition science community will miss him dearly, the influence of his life will endure through the impact of his publications, the lives of the patients he helped, the research that will be carried on by the many outstanding scientists he trained and inspired, and the nationally recognized educational programs he established at the UAB and elsewhere.

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