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# Kenneth H. Falchuk



*Photograph courtesy of Evan Falchuk*

After Dr. Kenneth H. Falchuk passed away on May 3, 2018, the flag atop Harvard Medical School flew at half-staff. Ken was beloved and respected as a physician, a teacher, a mentor, an investigator, a leader, a colleague, and a friend in a career that spanned five decades at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital (PBBH), the Brigham and Women's Hospital, and the Harvard Medical School,

Ken grew up in Maracay, Venezuela, and his Venezuelan roots were always dear to him. As a teenager, his parents sent him to New York City to live with an aunt so that he could attend high school in America, at Stuyvesant High School. A gifted student, he went on to graduate from Dartmouth College, and then from Harvard Medical School.

His deep connection to the Brigham began in 1966, when he started his medical residency at the PBBH. While there, he had the good fortune to meet another aspiring clinician, Nancy Kozinn, who was the assistant head nurse on the medical service. They

struck up a relationship, and in 1968 they married, spending the next 50 years at each other's side.

Ken spent two years at the National Institutes of Health, returning to the PBBH as chief medical resident. He joined the PBBH faculty, where over the next forty years he excelled as a clinician, teacher and investigator. Ken also spent many years conducting research on protein structure and zinc, publishing numerous studies in major journals.

Perhaps Ken's greatest passion was for teaching, particularly his enthusiasm for helping doctors *think* about how to make a proper diagnosis. His students shared his enthusiasm, coining the phrase "Falchukian" to describe his teaching and thinking style. As the supervisor of the Brigham's teaching program for Harvard Medical students, he was renowned for his case scenarios, which often presented complicated situations which could only be solved through clear, creative thinking and a close attention to detail. In 2004, Ken was honored to be promoted to Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, one of the proudest achievements of his life.

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*In tribute to their dedicated efforts to science and medicine, deceased members of the Harvard Faculty of Medicine (those at the rank of full or emeritus professor) receive a review of their life and contributions with a complete reflection, a **Memorial Minute**.*

Ken was dedicated to extending the reach of the Harvard and Brigham communities beyond the boundaries of Massachusetts. He spent many years working with physicians and patients abroad, including Venezuela and other Latin American countries. He founded the Brigham Center for International Medicine, which served thousands of patients from around the globe, helping people with some of the most challenging conditions find the proper diagnosis and treatment, and helping those patients and their families navigate the Brigham community and the American health care system.

Ken was also an entrepreneur who had a vision of helping many millions of people around the world make sure they too could get the right diagnosis and treatment. He founded a company called Best Doctors, Inc., which made an expert medical opinion available at the click of a button to more than 75 million people all around the world as part of a benefit of their job or insurance.

Ken inspired his family as well as his students. His brother Myron and his cousin Kenneth R. Falchuk also became physicians and both served as PBBH chief residents. His nephew Robert Friedlander, also from Venezuela, graduated from Harvard Medical School, practiced at the Brigham and rose to the rank of Professor at the Medical School.

Above all, Ken was devoted to his family, and his wife, Nancy. Their three children Evan, Brad, and Aimee greatly admired and loved their father. His fascination with the natural world, history, and storytelling were tremendous influences on their lives. His spirit lives on through them, and through Ken and Nancy's five grandchildren, Brenna, Colin, Lydia, Izzy, and Brody.

A man for all seasons, respected for his many efforts to make ours a better world, Ken is sorely missed.

Respectfully submitted,

Marshall A. Wolf, *Chairperson*

Evan Falchuk

Z. Myron Falchuk