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# David G. Freiman



David Galland Freiman, M.D. was born on July 1, 1911 in New York City, the son of Leopold and Dorothy (Galland) Freiman. After graduating from City College of New York, David attended the Long Island College of Medicine (now Downstate Medical Center SUNY), receiving his M.D. degree in 1935. David completed an internship in Internal Medicine, followed by an internship and residency in Pathology at Montifiore Hospital in New York. His first staff appointments were at the Massachusetts General Hospital (1944-1950) and Cincinnati General Hospital (1952-1956). In 1956, he returned to Boston as Chief of Pathology at the Beth Israel Hospital (now the Beth Israel

Deaconess Medical Center), a position he held until 1979. David Freiman died on December 10, 2003. He is survived by his wife, Ruth (Schein) Freiman, his children, Nancy and Len, and three grandchildren, Emily, Nathan and Eli.

Building on the solid departmental structure established by Monroe Schlesinger, M.D., the first Chief of Pathology at the Beth Israel Hospital, Dr. Freiman developed a hospital service of both diagnostic and research excellence. During his tenure, he consolidated the previously separate clinical laboratories into a single unit as part of the Pathology Department, and integrated clinical service and research activities within the Anatomic Pathology Division. As a result, a new spirit of cooperation and comradeship developed among previously isolated units of the pathology enterprise.

During his 23 years as Chief of Pathology, David maintained an active interest in research. In addition to numerous investigations involving histochemistry, his major contributions include seminal investigations on sarcoidosis and beryllium disease (the latter in collaboration with Harriet Hardy, M.D.), on the pathogenesis of vascular thrombi, and the pathologic aspects of pulmonary thromboemboli, including recognition of an unexpectedly high prevalence of old emboli (in the form of distal arterial webs) at autopsy. His study of sarcoidosis in collaboration with Dr. Longcope was a landmark contribution to our understanding of the clinical and pathological features of this disease. Using whole mounts of prostatic tissue, he was among the first to document the increasing prevalence of prostatic adenocarcinoma with increasing age. Most of these cancers were unrecognized clinically and were discovered incidentally at autopsy. His observation was among the first to document the high prevalence of occult prostatic cancer in elderly males.

David was also a leader in the administration of the Beth Israel Hospital. He served on the Research Committee, the Long-term Planning Committee, and as a member and Chairman of the Medical Executive Committee.

Dr. David Freiman was deeply committed to educational matters and played an enormous role in the direction of curricular and overall student learning at Harvard Medical School. Together with Dr. Alexander Leaf, he led the team that created the highly innovative Core Curriculum beginning in 1968. This curriculum sought to individualize the educational opportunities for the medical students based on their particular backgrounds, interests and aptitudes. The curriculum was characterized by the prominent integration of the quadrangle and clinical faculty in the presentation of the primary basic science and pathophysiology courses, termed the Cell Biology and Human Biology segments, respectively. The students were encouraged to be selective in their clinical choices, permitting in-depth correlation that was based on their personal goals for clinical versus research careers as well as for particular specialty preferences. This approach also served as a model for the pathophysiology courses in the Harvard-MIT Program in Health Sciences and Technology begun in 1971. This curriculum continued with modification until 1986, when it was updated with the problem-based (New Pathway) curriculum. However, the concept of core and highly integrated courses is now being revitalized in the curricular revisions of 2006.

To assist students in optimizing educational pathways best suited to their own needs, Dr. Freiman directed and served as the primary teacher in an alternative course of pathophysiology that was offered to the students in their preclinical years. This course coordinated the disorders of multiple systems, including the cardiovascular, respiratory and renal organs. As a bonus, the course was taught at the Beth Israel Hospital, thus allowing more intimate contact by the students with clinical issues. As an extension of his interest in medical education, Dr. Freiman served for many years as an advisor and mentor for a large number of students. He was a long-time member of the HMS Admissions Committee, coordinated the Pathophysiology Courses, and chaired the Curriculum Committee.

Dr. Freiman was a model physician-educator, at a time before this role came to be fully appreciated. As a result, he had a considerable impact on the careers of many of his residents and staff in the Department of Pathology at the Beth Israel Hospital. As examples, Dr. Seymour Rosen served as coordinator of the HMS renal pathophysiology course; Dr. Donald Antonioli led courses in the HST division, was overall coordinator of the Human Systems Pathophysiology Course and co-chaired the Committee on Educational Evaluation; and Dr. Harvey Goldman directed courses and served as Chair of the Curriculum Committee and as Faculty Dean for Medical Education. Many of Dr. Freiman's trainees have become nationally and internationally known specialists. Included among these are Drs. Harvey Goldman and Donald Antonioli (gastrointestinal disease); Drs. James Connolly and Stuart Schnitt (breast cancer); Drs. Peter Isaacson, Nancy Harris and Steven Swerdlow (hematopathology); and Drs. Arthur Tischler and Yogesh Dayal (endocrine disease). Of his many academic accomplishments, David was especially proud of this influence in shaping the careers of his trainees and colleagues. In recognition of his achievements in research, education, and administration, in 1969, David was named the Mallinckrodt Professor of Pathology, the first Chair endowed by Harvard Medical School at the Beth Israel Hospital.

In discussing the curricular revision of 1968, Dr. Morris Karnovsky, Shattuck Professor of Pathological Anatomy (Emeritus) said, "Overall this [new curriculum] was revolutionary, although David did not look like, nor behave like, a radical! Rather, he took on the onerous, and at times thankless task,

of converting into reality the theory and philosophy underpinning the curriculum. It required great patience, detail work, persistence and powers of persuasion to get the heads of departments and chiefs of services to cede some of their fiefdoms in favour of integrated teaching. The success of the curriculum, which proved particularly popular with students and junior faculty, was a telling tribute to David's masterly diplomacy.

“David belonged to an era when faculty held the view that their duty and responsibilities extended well beyond their immediate areas of interest to embrace the needs of the school as whole. David's whole career exemplified this concept of service - a concept almost Grecian in its regard for the school as a polis, or city state, in which every member contributes to the welfare of all. In these regards, David was a shining example to all of us, and the school has greatly benefited from his legacy until this very day.”

After stepping down as Beth Israel Hospital's Pathology Chair, David remained an enthusiastic and active member of the BIH-BIDMC-HMS community. For 20 years after his “retirement”, David served as a special assistant to the CEO of the hospital. In this capacity, he was instrumental in designing and bringing to completion space (both new and reconfigured) to meet the demands of expanding clinical and research programs. At the same time, he was an assistant in administration and student affairs to the HMS Dean of Students, Daniel Federman, M.D. At the medical school, he worked diligently to increase faculty-student social interactions by means of the formation of Academic Societies, and encouraged the acceptance of women and minorities to HMS via his long-term membership on the Admissions Committee.

On a personal level, David was a devoted husband and friend to his wife Ruth, of over 54 years. The two of them enjoyed a loving and gentle relationship typified by long walks, travel, reading and quiet conversation. David was also a wonderful and devoted father to his children Nancy and Len and the proud grandfather of Emily, Nate and Eli. David also had many personal interests such as tending to his rose garden, writing poetry for family events, photography (his pictorial family history still sits in the den of the family home perfectly ordered and numbered) and tinkering with an elaborate model train set-up. And although he would be the first to admit that he was never known for his athletic prowess, David was even known to shoot an occasional basket or toss a baseball in the backyard of his home (although he would deny it if he had ever been asked). In short, as accomplished as he was as a physician and an educator, David was a tremendously well-rounded individual whose personal interests and thirst for knowledge knew no bounds and whose qualities as a human being were truly exemplary.

At the unveiling of David Freiman's portrait at the Countway Library in March 2005, Mitchell T. Rabkin, M.D., former CEO of the Beth Israel Hospital commented,

“Dr. Freiman's influence went well beyond me, to impact on people at the hospital at all levels, and there are some even here today who would vouch that their lives have been changed irrevocably for the better as a result of his concern and counsel. He wore his many hats well, with grace and modesty – at BI, HMS, academic pathology, but also with his family and friends, and as an expert gardener, with a special interest in roses, as a thoughtful humanist, and consummate reader outside of medicine – which included the odd proclivity of reading the end of mysteries before he started the beginning. David claimed that it enhanced the overall experience!”

In discussing David's career at the portrait unveiling, Morris Karnovsky quoted the writer and historian Henry Brooks Adams (1838-1918), who wrote, “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his

influence stops. These words apply aptly to David Galland Freiman”.

In sum, David Galland Freiman was a notable scholar, teacher, mentor and administrator, a man of great credit to both the Harvard Medical School and its closely associated Beth Israel Hospital.

Respectfully submitted,

Harold F. Dvorak  
Harvey Goldman  
Donald Antonioli  
Ruth Freiman