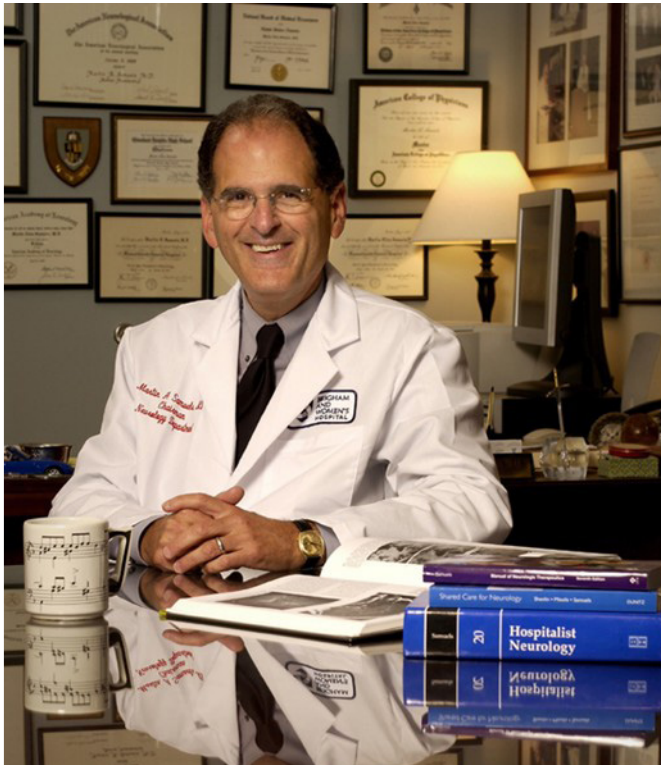




Martin Allen Samuels



Dr. Martin A. Samuels, a pioneering neurologist, esteemed educator, and cherished mentor, passed away in June 2023 at the age of 77. Known affectionately as “Marty” by colleagues and friends, Dr. Samuels was a beacon of knowledge and compassion in the medical community, and leaves an indelible mark on the fields of neurology and medicine.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Marty attended Cleveland Heights High School where he was class president. He pursued a BA in biology from Williams College, where he was elected class speaker. He then earned his MD from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, where he was also elected class speaker and would later earn an honorary Doctor of Science degree based on his career accomplishments.

Marty’s professional journey was marked by a relentless dedication to patient care and medical education. Following residency training in internal medicine at Boston City Hospital, he began training in neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital. He returned to Boston City Hospital midway through neurology residency to serve as medical chief resident, an experience that would guide his later pedagogic pursuits in medicine and neurology. Following his medical chief residency, he returned to Massachusetts General Hospital as a fellow in neuropathology and then as a senior resident in neurology.

Marty began his career by establishing a neurology service at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. His remarkable contributions led him to Brigham and Women’s Hospital in 1988, where he succeeded Dr. H. Richard Tyler and transformed the existing neurology division into a robust, independent department. Under his leadership as founding Chair, the Department of Neurology flourished, becoming a world-class program renowned for clinical excellence, medical education, and innovative basic, translational, and clinical research with over 250 academic appointments. In addition to

*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**.*

his role as Chair, Marty maintained an active clinical practice, serving regularly as attending neurologist for the inpatient ward and consultation services (the latter was named the Martin A. Samuels Neurology Consultation Service in 2010), preceptor in neurology resident clinic, and more generally, an invaluable resource for advice on treating complex neurological and neuro-medical problems.

Marty was celebrated not only for his clinical acumen but for his ability to humanize medicine. His legendary “morning report” conferences at Brigham and Women’s Hospital were a testament to his teaching prowess, where he seamlessly integrated historical lessons with modern scientific insights. In these conferences, Marty frequently acknowledged and invoked lessons learned from three powerful influences at Massachusetts General Hospital, Drs. Raymond D. Adams, C. Miller Fisher, and E. P. Richardson, and sought to transmit these lessons to the next generation of learners. Marty’s teaching style was intimate and engaging, resonating deeply with audiences ranging from undergraduate students to seasoned professionals. He was a frequent and sought-after speaker at conferences around the world, sharing his knowledge and insights with a global audience. Marty’s lectures often drew standing-room-only crowds, where those in attendance were captivated by his exacting clinical analytical skills and profound insights into complex neurological conditions. One of Marty’s most powerful contributions to medical education was his openness about diagnostic errors. He courageously shared cases where he had made mistakes, emphasizing the importance of understanding cognitive biases and heuristics. This approach not only helped mitigate future errors but also fostered a culture of continuous learning and humility among his trainees and peers. By addressing the imperfections inherent in clinical practice, Marty encouraged a more thoughtful and reflective approach to patient care.

Marty’s impact extended beyond neurology. He was an intellectual bridge between internal medicine and neurology, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these disciplines. His expertise in “borderland” clinical areas such as neurohepatology, neurohematology, and neurogastroenterology, as well as his pioneering work in neurocardiology, particularly the phenomenon of “Voodoo Death” and Takotsubo cardiomyopathy, underscored his comprehensive understanding of medicine. His ability to navigate and integrate multiple fields made him a unique and invaluable resource in the medical community. Marty founded and directed the Harvard Medical School postgraduate courses “Neurology for the Non-Neurologist” and “Intensive Review of Neurology” annually for over thirty years. A prolific author, Dr. Samuels contributed to numerous seminal publications, including “*Samuels’s Manual of Neurologic Therapeutics*,” “*Office Practice of Neurology*,” “*Adams and Victor’s Principles of Neurology*,” and “*Hospitalist Neurology*.” He was the discussant in thirteen New England Journal of Medicine Clinicopathologic Conferences, the most ever by a single person.

Marty’s contributions were recognized with numerous awards and honors throughout his career, including Fellowships in the *American Academy of Neurology*, *American Neurological Association*, and *Royal College of Physicians (London)*, and Mastership in the *American College of Physicians*. He received the A.B. Baker Award for Lifetime Achievement in Neurological Education from the *American Academy of Neurology* in 2006 and the *American Neurological Association* Distinguished Teacher

Award in 2011. He is the only neurologist cited in all editions of *Castle Connolly Best Doctors in America*. At Harvard Medical School, Marty was the first recipient of the Faculty Prize for Excellence in Teaching and was asked to serve as faculty speaker at Class Day a record three times. In 2013, an endowed chair at Harvard Medical School was established in Marty's honor, a testament to his enduring influence.

Marty's personal attributes - his kindness, generosity, humility, and unwavering dedication to his work - endeared him to all who knew him. His enthusiasm for the field of neurology was infectious, inspiring countless students and colleagues to pursue excellence in their own careers. Marty recognized the value of building culture in his Department. He created a work environment that was inclusive, supportive, and collegial. He brought out the best in everyone, including his patients, and he led by example. He understood intuitively that clinician wellness came from taking good care of patients, celebrating each other's successes, and being there - with an always open door - to help navigate the challenges of work and life. He was instrumental in guiding countless medical careers, often quietly working behind the scenes to ensure the success of his colleagues and mentees. His approachable nature fostered a sense of camaraderie and family among his peers. He and his wife Susan frequently opened their home for memorable events and celebrations that strengthened bonds within the medical community.

Dr. Martin A. Samuels demonstrated that at the heart of neurology and medicine lies not just scientific inquiry, but a deep, empathic connection to patients. Though his academic accomplishments were vast, his legacy will best endure through the legions of clinicians and students who were fortunate enough to see Marty in his element - at the patient's bedside, in a lecture hall, or at his beloved morning report conference. It was in those settings that Marty's brilliance, wit, and incisiveness were most compelling and indeed, most memorable.

Respectfully submitted,

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Allan H. Ropper, MD