

Obituary

Laurence Samuel Kaminsky (1940-2020)



The drug/xenobiotic metabolism research community is saddened to learn of the recent passing of Dr. Laurence Samuel (Larry) Kaminsky at the age of 80. Larry was born in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1940. He was trained in organic chemistry at the University of Cape Town, receiving his Ph.D. in 1966. Following post-doctoral training at Yale and State University of New York at Albany, he became a faculty member in the Physiology and Medical Biochemistry Department at University of Cape Town (1968-1975). In 1975, Larry immigrated to the United States with his wife Sylvia, son Philip, and daughter Rena, and joined the Wadsworth Center of New York State Department of Health as a Senior Research Scientist. Larry spent more than 30 years at the Wadsworth Center, taking on various leadership positions, including Director of Biochemical Toxicology, Chief of Laboratory of Human Toxicology and Molecular Epidemiology, Deputy Director of the Division of Environmental Disease Prevention, Professor and Chair of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences, and Director of the Office of Environmental Research Development. In the past 14 years, Larry served as the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development at the Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany.

Larry was an active researcher for nearly 60 years. In his early work, Larry published a number of important studies on the biochemistry of cytochrome c. His work on cytochrome c and redox enzymes led him to cytochrome P450, on which his first studies were published in 1975. His most well-known research focused on cytochrome P450 and the metabolism of the anticoagulant warfarin. An early adopter of HPLC, his lab was able to separate multiple metabolites of the stereoisomers of warfarin and leverage this in probing the activities of rat and human P450 enzymes, since multiple enzymes yield different profiles of warfarin metabolites. This resulted in a multitude of important scientific papers on P450 enzymes, frequently in collaboration with noted P450 scientists, such as Fred Guengerich, Joyce Goldstein, and Jim Halpert. His further work on P450 enzymes included characterization of intestinal P450s and the metabolism of various drugs, such as theophylline and tolbutamide. As a researcher in a state public health research organization, Larry also carried out research of interest to public health, such as the biochemical toxicology of fluorocarbons and metals. Career-wise, Larry was the author or co-author of more than 170 original research papers and review articles, many of which were highly cited. One of his papers received the Frank R. Blood Award from the Society of Toxicology in 1991.

Larry provided important service and leadership to the drug/xenobiotic metabolism research community. He served as an Associate Editor for *Drug Metabolism and Disposition* (2000-2017) and *Pharmacology and Therapeutics* (2004-2008) and was a Guest Editor for *Molecular Pharmacology* (1992). He was elected Chair of the Drug Metabolism division of ASPET (2005), and Councilor (1994-1997) and Treasurer (2005-2009) of ISSX. He chaired two major scientific meetings in our field for ISSX (1992) and Microsomes and Drug Oxidations (2008). He was a member of the standing International Advisory Committee for Microsomes and Drug Oxidations.

Larry mentored eight Ph.D. students and numerous postdoctoral scientists and junior faculty members. His scientific legacy continues to be realized in the research carried out in the academic and private sectors by those scientists he trained. After joining the VA, Larry changed his focus to translational research, mentoring many physician scientists and significantly expanding both basic and clinical research at the Albany VA Medical Center.

Our research community extends its condolences to Larry's family. Larry enjoyed life as much as he enjoyed research. He liked many things in life: music, food, wine, art, and travel. He was well known for his knowledge in wine tasting. He was a role model for balancing life and career. Larry will be remembered as a passionate researcher, a good friend, a great mentor, an inspiring leader, and a dedicated public servant.

By *Ronald S. Obach and Xinxin Ding*