

UT Southwestern Medical Center

In Memoriam: Dr. John Dietschy

July 22, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

We write to share news of the passing of our esteemed colleague, John M. Dietschy, M.D., Professor Emeritus and former Chief of the Digestive and Liver Diseases Division in the Department of Internal Medicine. His death represents a great loss for the entire UT Southwestern community, and we offer our sincerest condolences to Dr. Dietschy's family.

Dr. Dietschy was a visionary gastroenterologist who helped shape research and clinical practice in the field for over 50 years. His seminal contributions to our understanding of bile acid and cholesterol metabolism set the foundation for many of the important discoveries in this area.

Dr. Dietschy received his medical degree from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis in 1958. He completed his internal medicine residency at the VA Medical Center in Denver, and he then served as a postdoctoral research fellow in gastroenterology at Boston University School of Medicine.

Dr. Donald Seldin recruited Dr. Dietschy to join the UT Southwestern faculty in 1965. Together with Dr. John Fordtran, Dr. Dietschy founded the Gastroenterology Division, which he led from 1979 to 1998. The Division of Digestive and Liver Diseases was formed in 1998 by the merger of the Gastroenterology Division and the Liver Unit. Dr. Dietschy chaired this new Division from 1998 to 2002, and it remains one of the top academic gastroenterology and hepatology units in the country for its commitment to excellence in patient care, education, and pioneering research on digestive and liver diseases.

In recognition of his substantial scientific insights, Dr. Dietschy received numerous awards, including the Distinguished Achievement Award of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) in 1978, the Heinrich Wieland Prize in lipid biochemistry (University of Munich, 1983), the McKenna Medal of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (1985), National Institutes of Health MERIT Award (1995), and the Janssen Award in Gastroenterology for Lifetime Achievement in Digestive Sciences (2001). In 1988-89, he served as President of the AGA.

Dr. Dietschy's leadership at UT Southwestern had a profound and lasting influence on many physician-scientists, including Dr. Michael Brown, who was a research fellow under Dr. Dietschy and went on to become co-recipient with Dr. Joseph Goldstein of the 1985 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

Those fortunate to have collaborated with Dr. Dietschy will recall his passion for science was only matched by his passion for mentoring the next generation of researchers. For several decades, Dr. Dietschy served as Director of the Division's successful fellowship program, which is now integrated among several key clinical sites and includes a research track supported by an NIH T32 training grant. His interactions with mentees broadened many horizons, as their conversations would include insights from Dr. Dietschy's many interests beyond medicine, including pre-Columbian art and archeology, history, mountain climbing, and classical music – especially baroque.

A celebration of Dr. Dietschy's life will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation to the [International Myeloma Foundation](#) or a charity of your choice.

He will be deeply missed.

Sincerely,

Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D.
President, UT Southwestern Medical Center

W. P. Andrew Lee, M.D.
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Dean, UT Southwestern Medical School