

UT Southwestern Medical Center

Remembering Dr. Eugene P. Frenkel, who led Division of Hematology and Oncology for 30 years at UT Southwestern

June 23, 2019

To the UT Southwestern Community:

It is with great sadness that we have learned of the passing of Dr. Eugene P. Frenkel, an internationally recognized cancer researcher and admired clinician and educator who pioneered UT Southwestern's Division of Hematology and Oncology.

On behalf of the entire UT Southwestern community, we offer our heartfelt condolences to Dr. Frenkel's family, and his many friends and colleagues. Information on pending services will be made available in the [UT Southwestern newsroom](#).

Recruited by Dr. Donald Seldin in 1962 to serve as Chief of the newly created Division of Hematology and Oncology, Dr. Frenkel led the Division for the next 30 years and had a 57-year career at UT Southwestern filled with impressive achievements. For decades, he was a medical adviser to legions of Dallasites who came to depend on his wise counsel, even when he was not acting as their physician.

A National Cancer Institute Investigator, Dr. Frenkel had dual appointments in Internal Medicine and Radiology at UT Southwestern. He served as Chief of the Nuclear Medicine Service at the VA; was appointed a Professor of Clinical Oncology by the American Cancer Society and served on its Texas Board of Directors throughout the 1980s; was President of the Dallas County American Cancer Society and served on its advisory board for 20 years; and provided service to more than two dozen state, national, and international professional boards and societies.

Dr. Frenkel's early research led to the discovery that vitamin B12 deficiencies had a destructive effect on the myelin sheath, a covering that surrounds and protects nerve fibers. In other studies, he helped to define the basis of drug resistance in the treatment of patients with breast and genitourinary cancers, and he remained committed to translational cancer research throughout his career.

Dr. Frenkel was revered for his compassionate bedside care and was highly respected as an academic mentor who supported the career development of countless students, residents, fellows, and junior faculty.

The high level of personalized care he provided to decades of grateful patients resulted in substantial philanthropic support in his honor to advance cancer research and recognize outstanding teaching. An anonymous donor recently established the Eugene P. Frenkel, M.D. Scholars in Clinical Medicine Program to support the development of the next generation of academic physicians in disciplines related to the care of patients with cancer. In 1988, Patsy and Raymond Nasher, renowned Dallas art collectors, donated the Isaac Witkin sculpture Sabras, which was placed on the lawn near the Eugene McDermott Academic Administration Building, in honor of Drs. Rhoda and Eugene Frenkel.

Dr. Frenkel's enduring legacy will be remembered by the many patients he treated, the generations of medical students who benefited from his rigorous mentoring, and physicians and scientists worldwide who were influenced by his seminal work in medical oncology.

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