

In Memoriam

Louis Lemberger

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About 50 years ago, when I was a Section Chief at the National Institute of Mental Health working on biogenic amines, I received a call from Dr. John Burns recommending a brilliant young researcher, Louis Lemberger, to come to my laboratory as a Research Associate to continue his work on drug metabolism. This was during the Vietnam War and a position in the US Public Health Service as a Commissioned Officer and time spent at NIH would satisfy his obligation for Military Service. It was a very propitious time: Raphael Mechoulam had recently discovered Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) as the active component of marijuana, Julie Axelrod had just received the Nobel Prize, radioactively labeled substances were readily available, and interest in

psychoactive drugs was high. Lou made most of the opportunity, and during the 2 years he spent at NIH, he published about a dozen papers, many as first author of studies on the metabolism, pharmacokinetics, and effects of THC in humans and animals.

His productivity before and during his time at NIH was a springboard from which he ascended to prominence in the pharmaceutical industry and as an International leader in the fields of pharmacology, clinical pharmacology, experimental biology, and drug development. After leaving NIH for a position at Eli Lilly, he rose to be the Director of Clinical Pharmacology of the Eli Lilly Laboratory for Clinical Research and developed a productive association with the Indiana University School of Medicine as the Professor of Medicine. In his role as a clinical pharmacologist, he was the first to administer a number of important drugs, including Prozac (antidepressant) and pergolide (anti-parkinsonian). He was elected to Fellowship in the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology and his contributions have been recognized as the recipient of numerous awards, among which were ASPET Award for Experimental Therapeutics; Henry W. Elliott Distinguished Service Award, American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics; Harry Gold Award, ASPT; Rawls-Palmer Award, ASCPT; and Honorary Doctorate, Long Island University. In 1989, he was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus of the Albert Einstein School of Medicine, where he received his MD PhD degree in 1968.

Lou was an ardent basketball and football fan even in the early days at NIH, and with his naturally acquired interpersonal relationship skills led him into long-term friendships with a host of professional and other friends. It was indeed a special pleasure to have had him in our laboratory and to follow his many accomplishments over these many years.

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