

## IN MEMORIAM

### Ellen Stover, Ph.D.



**1950-2014**

It is unusual for an obituary to be written by more than one author, much less three. The fact that the three of us wished to honor and celebrate Ellen Stover in the ACNP journal is a testimony to the impact she has had on the field. Ellen personified the consummate NIH program officer. She tirelessly served her constituency—those whose grants were in “her” portfolio and advocated for them with NIMH leadership. She worked with multiple NIMH directors, perhaps a record, doing her best to incorporate her views as to where the science was going into the current director’s vision.

After graduating in 1972 with her BA from the University of Wisconsin’s Honors Program in Experimental Psychology, she relocated to Washington, D.C. where, in 1978, she received her Ph.D. degree from the Catholic University of America. Remarkably, she conducted her doctoral work while an NIH employee, first as a consultant to NIDA (1972-1974) then as Executive Secretary (now termed Scientific Review Administrator) of a Drug Abuse Research Review Committee for NIDA (1974-1976), and then as a Special Assistant to the NIMH and Executive Secretary of the new NIMH Small Grant Committee (1977-1979), and subsequently the Chief of this program (1979-1983). It was at this juncture that one of us (Nemeroff) first encountered her as his very first NIMH grant was funded by this committee. How kind and helpful she was to this naïve and inexperienced young investigator! From that time forward, she rose through the ranks to serve as Chief of the Research Resources Branch of NIMH to Deputy

Director in the Division of Basic Sciences at NIMH and eventually Director of the Center for Mental Health Research on AIDS and the Director of AIDS and Health and Behavior, all at NIMH. She was justifiably proud of her role in developing an NIMH research agenda that focused on understanding the behavioral and psychological factors that contribute to HIV/AIDS transmission. Research carried out in her programs have formed the basis for effective prevention programs in the United States and worldwide.

Even during this time when she was focused on the devastating effects of AIDS in the United States and worldwide, she maintained her interest in major mental illness including schizophrenia. It was during this time that she worked closely with Wayne Fenton, M.D., who was leading the NIMH programs in schizophrenia. They formed a remarkably effective team. Wayne understood schizophrenia and the need for research to improve its outcome. Ellen understood how to use the tools of government to accomplish important things. She was devastated by his tragic death at the hands of a psychotic patient on September 3, 2006. Ellen was appropriately recognized by her peers on a number of occasions—the NIH Director’s Award in 2005 for her contribution to treatment development for schizophrenia through public/private partnerships as well as by UCLA with a Distinguished Achievement Award in 2002, and many others. She was a regular attendee of the ACNP annual meetings, catching up with “her” grantees and planning new research strategies. She was a regular and dependable reviewer for *Neuropsychopharmacology* and participated in ACNP panels.

Ellen poured her heart and soul into her work and served the NIH and her constituent researchers as passionately and effectively as anyone we have known. She exemplified what was best about government service and biomedical research for the public interest. Her colleagues and grantees respected and loved her. She developed decade’s long friendships with many. When she became ill they rallied to support her, along with her husband, Alan; her children, Samantha (Sami), Elena, and Randall (Randy); and her sister Lisa.

Ellen’s cheerful personality, passion for science, and generosity of spirit will be sorely missed by

her family, the NIH, and so many of us in the biomedical research community.

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