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IN MEMORIAM

Jerry Sepinwall, 1940–1998

Jerry Sepinwall died on August 5, 1998 at the age of 57 of a recurrent episode of cancer. He was a respected member of ACNP and a personal friend and colleague with whom I had the pleasure to collaborate in the Department of Pharmacology at Hoffmann La Roche for 14 years.

Jerry was born in Montreal, Canada (December 14, 1940), attended McGill University and received his doctorate in Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania (1966). He joined Roche after graduation and it was there that he made his significant scientific contributions and well deserved reputation in the field.

Jerry's recent passing is a profound loss to his family, myself, the many others who collaborated scientifically with him and those who knew him as a friend and colleague. My early positive impressions of Jerry as warm, personable, modest, eager to help and as an extraordinary resource of information continued to grow over the many years I knew him. His scientific ability and style were outstanding.

It is impossible to speak of Jerry Sepinwall without reference to his special personality and character. His quiet and humble demeanor were very obvious to even the most casual acquaintance. His acceptance of others, failure to ever get annoyed or speak harshly of anyone gave him wide acceptance and made him the person in which one could confide and with whom one could discuss most any topic. Jerry was a profoundly religious person and lived his life deeply conscious of the welfare of others and the ideals and guidelines of the tenets of his religious background. His love and care of his family and unhesitant support of the needy in his local community was unique. After speaking to a number of people, I find that Jerry never said no to whomever asked for help, or to whomever he felt needed his support.

Jerry was recognized by his colleagues for his significant contributions to characterizing the behavioral pharmacology of benzodiazepines and their mechanisms, invoking the relative role of serotonin and GABA, and to the elimination of the postulated role of glycine. Of great interest was the extension of the phenomenon of "initial drug effects" in drug naive animals in the "conflict" paradigm and the development of tolerance to the sedative effects of benzodiazepines. He directed extensive programs towards the search for new benzodiazepines and non-benzodiazepines for anxiety and made significant contributions to the development of Versed, Limbitrol and Mazicon. His work on the behavioral effects of Valium was classic and served as a paragon by numerous other workers.

He made significant contributions in the search for cognitive performance enhancing agents, including the effects of cholinesterase inhibitors and muscarinic cholinergic agonists. His work also included development of various models of cognitive performance. Collabo-

rating with academic colleagues, they showed that aged squirrel monkeys develop senile plaques, which they attempted to correlate with deficits in cognitive performance. This work helped to validate the relevance of using aged squirrel monkeys as models for studying cognitive disorders in the elderly. His research in brain mechanisms included stroke and ischemic disorders including antagonists of glutamic receptors and studies on Parkinson disorders. His research in the area of stroke included evaluation of morphinan derivatives and in selecting dextrorphan HCl as a compound for clinical development for treating stroke. His work supported the work of others to show that dextrorphan exerted its neuroprotective effects by acting as a noncompetitive antagonist at the NMDA subtype of the glutamate receptor. His studies included MPTP-lesioned monkeys to support clinical trials of the MAO-B inhibitor, lazakemide for retarding the progression of Parkinson's disease, and the COMT inhibitor, tolcapone, to attempt to improve the efficacy of levodopa therapy.

Those familiar with Jerry's research efforts were impressed with his unique attention to details, his imaginative approach and thoroughness in his work. Jerry's personal traits made him an exceptional colleague. His exhaustive knowledge of the relevant literature, whether past or current was compendious. He characteristically participated without restraint and without concern for credit for his own significant contributions. His ego never got in the way. His ease of style, support for his collaborator's efforts and extensive preparedness for the project made for more than pleasant collegiality. Jerry was a model to many younger scientists and he had a significant impact on the development of several successful careers. Jerry will be missed by his family, friends, and colleagues.

Jerry is survived by his wife, Harriet, and children Stacy, Alyssa, and Alan.

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