

In Memoriam

Larry S. Benardo, M.D., Ph.D.

Larry Steven Benardo, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Vice Chair of the Department of Neurology, and Professor of Neurosurgery and Physiology and Pharmacology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, died on December 28, 2004, of complications after treatment for a spinal cord tumor. He was 48 years old.

Larry earned his Ph.D. in Neurosciences from Stanford University in 1981. His research in brain function led him to pursue a career in medicine, and he earned his M.D. from the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University in 1985. He completed his residency training in neurology at the Neurological Institute at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center and was a member of the Columbia faculty before joining the faculty at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in 1990 as Assistant Professor in the Departments of Neurology and Pharmacology. In 1997, Larry was appointed Vice Chair of the Department of Neurology and was promoted to the level of full Professor in 2000.

Larry was a prominent figure in the Department of Neurology and was instrumental in the growth of neurological subspecialty services at University Hospital of Brooklyn at SUNY Downstate. Initially, as Director and Founder of the Epilepsy Center, Larry expanded epilepsy services for adults and children and set up clinical trials with new antiepileptic drugs. Larry also helped institute an epilepsy monitoring unit to assist in the evaluation of patients with epilepsy. This undertaking expanded into the eventual establishment of the Clinical Neurosciences Center at SUNY Downstate, a \$1 million unit that opened in May 2004. The Clinical Neurosciences Center provides services for patients with stroke, epilepsy, neurobehavioral disorders and sleep disorders. It also includes a neurosurgical and postoperative intensive care unit. This Center is the most comprehensive unit of its kind in Brooklyn and brings together expertise from the Departments of Neurology, Neurosurgery, Psychiatry, Pathology, Physiology, and Pharmacology. Fostering this type of teamwork approach and promoting the close association between the basic and clinical sciences were goals that were particularly important to Larry.

As both an M.D. and a Ph.D., Larry was active in both patient care and basic science research. For more than



25 years, Larry ran a research program dedicated to the study of basic mechanisms underlying cortical and temporal lobe seizures. Larry received several substantial grants and a number of prestigious awards for his research, including a Dana Foundation Fellowship, a Clinical Investigator Development Award, and Independent Investigator Awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He authored more than 100 scientific publications and served on the Editorial Boards of *Epilepsia* and *Epilepsy Currents*. Larry was elected to membership in the American Neurological Association, he served on several committees for the American Epilepsy Society, and he also served on NIH study sections reviewing the scientific merit of grant applications. In addition, Larry was recognized in the publication *Best Doctors in America*. All of these honors attest to his excellence as both a clinician and a scientist.

Larry is survived by his devoted wife Charlotte (affectionately known as Charlie), his mother Irene, and his brother Craig. Larry was an inspiration to us all, and he will be profoundly missed.

Hillary B. Michelson
Lisa R. Merlin
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