

Dr. Robert Katzman, Pioneering Alzheimer's Disease Expert, Dies

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Robert Katzman, M.D., Professor Emeritus of Neurosciences, former chair of the Department of Neurosciences and founding director of the Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine died on Tuesday, September 16, at his home in La Jolla after a long illness. He was 82 years old.

An internationally known leader in Alzheimer's research, Katzman was instrumental in establishing the ADRC at UC San Diego in 1984, one of the original five Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers of its kind in the country funded by the National Institute on Aging. He held the Florence Riford Chair for Research in Alzheimer's Disease at UC San Diego from 1984 until his retirement in 1995. Katzman was also a founder of the national Alzheimer's Association, an achievement he once remarked was the one of which he was most proud.

"His work helped bring UC San Diego to the forefront of medical research into Alzheimer's disease," said Doris Trauner, M.D., professor and interim chair of the Department of Neurosciences. "He was instrumental in attracting world-renowned neuroscientists to the program, in addition to having a tremendous impact on the understanding of Alzheimer's disease."

His landmark 1976 editorial in the American Medical Association's "Archives of Neurology" was the first to state the prevalence and severity of Alzheimer's disease, calling it a "major killer." He was a strong advocate for increased funding for research in the disease and, in part due to Katzman's influence, federal funding in Alzheimer's research grew from \$5 million in 1980 to over \$300 million by 1996.

"Bob Katzman was a very committed mentor to both junior and senior colleagues," said Fred H. Gage, Ph.D., professor in the Laboratory of Genetics at the Salk Institute of Biological Studies and adjunct professor of neurosciences at UC San Diego. "He raised the world's awareness to the magnitude of Alzheimer's disease and was responsible for building a world-class clinical and experimental research program for Alzheimer's here in San Diego. Bob was a deep thinker with broad interests beyond his own research, and he provided support, advice and guidance to many colleagues and organizations worldwide. We will greatly miss him, but his legacy is great and will be long lasting."

"His pioneering and really, revolutionary, work in Alzheimer's disease for more than three decades paved the way for clinical trials of potential treatments to delay the onset or progression of the disease being done today," said David Salmon, Ph.D., professor of neurosciences at UC San Diego and a long-time colleague. "His research and influence will continue to have a profound impact on the search for a cure or treatment for this devastating disease."

Robert Katzman was born in Denver, Colorado on November 29, 1925, where he grew up. After serving in the Navy in the Pacific theater during World War II, he was an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, then attended Harvard Medical School, graduating cum laude in 1953. He finished his clinical training as an intern on the Harvard Service at Boston City Hospital and as a resident in neurology at the Neurological Institute at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital. Katzman's career as an investigator-teacher-clinician was developed at the

Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York. He was chair of neurology there from 1964 until 1984, when he moved to UC San Diego.

His research career began at Harvard Medical School where he studied the movement of potassium ions from blood to brain and was a co-recipient of the Borden Undergraduate Research Award in 1953. At Einstein, he continued working on the movement of ions and amino acids across the blood-brain barrier, on brain swelling or edema that occurs in response to toxins and tumors, and on the formation of the cerebral-spinal fluid. He received the 1960 S. Weir Mitchell Award from the American Academy of Neurology, and was a co-editor of the first neurochemistry text *Basic Neurochemistry* (1972), a book now in its seventh edition. His work on brain electrolytes was summarized in a book written with Dr. Hanna Pappius and published in 1972 entitled *Brain Electrolytes and Fluid Metabolism*.

Katzman's research direction changed dramatically in the early 1970s. When he was in training to be a neurologist, Alzheimer's disease was defined as a "presenile dementia" - onset before age 65 - and considered to be an interesting but rare disorder. In the 1960s, a form of dementia in patients with very large cerebral ventricles was described, and Katzman started clinical and pathological studies of these patients. It turned out that the majority of these patients actually had Alzheimer's disease. It also became apparent that the disease affected older persons, not only those under age 65, and that it was a major public health problem. While at Einstein, he met Robert Terry, M.D., a neuropathologist who had begun working on Alzheimer's disease in 1960. Their labs were down the hall from each other. As they spent more and more time together, Katzman's interest in the disease grew. Katzman and Terry became life-long friends and moved to UC San Diego together in 1984.

Katzman became an Alzheimer's disease activist, redefining Alzheimer's disease as the most frequent progressive dementia during aging. David A. Drachman, M.D., Professor of Neurology at the University of Massachusetts commented, "His key goal was that everyone must have heard of Alzheimer's disease, if we were to understand and defeat it. It was not that any one individual researcher could be expected to find the cure, or the underlying cause; but like a pyramid, in order to raise the peak of it by a foot, you would have to build a huge infrastructure - and Bob proceeded to do just that."

Katzman served on the Advisory Council of the National Institute of Aging from 1982 to 1985; and was President of the American Neurological Association in 1985-1986. Among his many honors and awards are election to the Institute of Medicine (1983), the Henderson Memorial Award from the American Geriatric Association (1986), the George W. Jacoby Award from the American Neurological Association (1989), the Potamkin Prize for Research in Pick's, Alzheimer's and Related Diseases from the American Academy of Neurology (1992), the Crystal Tower Award as Pioneer in Alzheimer's Disease Research from the Alzheimer's Association (1998), and the Luigi Amaducci Memorial Award, International Psychogeriatric Association, (2003).

Katzman is survived by his wife, Nancy, of La Jolla, sons David and his wife Antoinette Byam, of Brooklyn and grandson, Jesse Byam-Katzman, a freshman at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, and Daniel of Clayton, California. Plans for a memorial service at UC San Diego are pending.

Friends and colleagues may send contributions in lieu of flowers to the Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at UC San Diego (<http://adrc.ucsd.edu/giving.html> or phone 858-822-1030) or to the American Academy of Neurology "Giants of Neurology" foundation (<https://www.aan.com/go/foundation/giants>).

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