



Frank Greenberg, MD, FACMG

1948–1998

Frank Greenberg, MD, FACMG lost his battle with AIDS on July 3, just a month short of his 50th birthday. Frank was beloved by all in Medical Genetics, and had a profound impact on our discipline, the professional careers and training of many of our colleagues, as well as the lives of many patients.

Frank was born in Perth Amboy, New Jersey and only later in life did he become a Texan. As an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, he studied zoology and then pursued his interest in biology and medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, receiving his MD degree in 1974. He did his Pediatrics and Genetics training at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia.

After a two-year period studying genetic epidemiology at the Center for Disease Control Birth Defects Branch in Atlanta, Frank launched his remarkable career in Clinical Genetics at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. As Director of the Birth Defects-Genetics Clinic at Baylor from 1981 until his retirement in 1994, Frank's clinical talents benefited thousands of patients from all over the United States. He created an invaluable training environment not only for the Baylor medical students, residents, and fellows in genetics, but also for his faculty colleagues and peers. Soon after his joining the genetics faculty at Baylor, it was clear that Frank was a Guru of clinical dysmorphism. The number of unknowns at case conferences decreased greatly. Others would sit back and wait for Frank to pronounce the diagnosis; if he didn't know what it was, how would they? During his career at Baylor, he became one of the best known dysmorphologists in the profession, a fact which led to his traveling widely as a national and international speaker even after his retirement in 1994. He was honored in 1995 with the Distinguished Texas Geneticist Award by the Texas Genetics Society.

Frank made numerous contributions to the fields of dysmorphism, clinical genetics, and cytogenetics: his early interest in DiGeorge syndrome and its association with deletions of chromosome 22 and 10; the Miller-Dieker syndrome associated with deletions of 17p; his critical role in defining the Smith-Magenis syndrome associated with deletions of 17p; and Williams syndrome associated with deletions of 7q. From 1981 to 1998 he generated over 100 publications, a truly remarkable feat for a very busy clinician. It is important to stress that his publications were particularly significant, because most of them were not simple case reports but include numerous landmark papers establishing the cytogenetic etiology of a previously known syndrome or providing the definitive description of the phenotype for a chromosome deletion syndrome. Frank's distinctive clinical and scientific talents were recognized on an international level; he was a popular speaker and an active meeting participant around the world. He traveled in the inner circles of the various dysmorphism clubs as one of their respected senior members.

And finally, Frank had an infectious zest for life. This was well known to anyone lucky enough to come in contact with him: his professional colleagues, through his deep curiosity and love of science, and his many close friends, as they delighted (and participated) in his passion for food (the more garlic the better) and his always present and unique sense of humor. Everyone who had the opportunity to know Frank loved him very much and knowing him was a very special and transforming experience. The Genetics community and his many colleagues and friends have lost a precious treasure far too early.

Frank is survived by his mother, Frances Greenberg, his sister, Susan Englander, and his beloved life partner, Linwood Vincent.

David H. Ledbetter, PhD