

he always seemed to just know and be interested in my career, my family and things that connected us. Perhaps this is the greatest gift he was trying to teach.

—Michael Bigby

Irwin was a great man...A father to generations of dermatologists and a great leader of our specialty.

—Guy Webster

He alone got dermatologic surgeons malpractice coverage years ago for liposuction in New York.

—Rhoda S. Narins

I recall my first meeting with Irwin. I was giving him the oral exam on clinical dermatology for the American Board. I had 15 Kodachromes of rare and difficult cases which each candidate was to discuss for 13 minutes. With Irwin I never got past the first slide because he completely enthralled me with his lucid and detailed discussion of that first patient.

—Walter Shelley

I will always remember Irwin at the Gordon conferences as a thoughtful scientist who was dedicated to academic dermatology and not afraid to mentor young women as well as young men.

—Madeleine Duvic

As a chairman, he had confidence in his staff, and he was intensely interested in cultivating young investigators.

—Tung-Tien Sun

I'm convinced that Irwin knew nearly all of us including our strengths and weaknesses. No one loved dermatology more or gave more of himself to it.

—C. William Hanke

Irwin Freedberg was a model to us all as a physician, an educator and a dear friend and colleague.

—Steve Webster

What remains forever is my gratitude to Irwin for his leadership and his encouragement of our (myself and my wife's) pursuit of dermatology. He also taught me to revere the scientific and questioning approach to all aspects of dermatology, which we still apply

daily to all our endeavors.

—Robert A. Weiss

It is truly a sad time to lose one of the giants in our field who also was a real "mensch."

—Gary Monheit

One of the best, a true Gentleman, always good for a hug.

—Bernett Johnson

Only a few months ago (at the AAD meeting in New Orleans), when receiving a Dermatology Foundation Lifetime Service Award he seized the moment to say, "forgive me for making this a 'bully pulpit,' but we *must* lead the next generation of residents into professional lives that include a commitment to teaching, a pledge to service." His was a life of devotion to science, to medicine, to students, to colleagues, to family.

—Steve Cohen

His abiding enthusiasm, encouragement, and support had an enormous impact on my professional development.

—Doug Lowy

My fondest memories of Irwin will be those times that he and I would bump into each other during our solitary excursions around the poster exhibits during the quiet times at the Academy or SID meetings. He would be studiously moving from poster to poster, frequently dictating follow-up notes to himself. Always the scholar, always the

one looking for kernels of new information that he might nurture into useful new paradigms for his patients, his colleagues, and his beloved department.

—Richard D. Sontheimer

Irwin's articles made the point that the scientific method was being applied to the study of skin disease and that this would lead to better understanding of pathophysiology and in time to rational therapies.

—James J. Leyden

I will miss Irwin's wisdom and warm personality greatly.

—Lee Nesbit

Irwin was an instrumental guide and mentor for many of us, before the days when mentorship had prestige and recognition.

—Stephanie Pincus

Irwin, you were and you will be the role model that several of us will emulate.

—Luis Diaz

I'll remember Irwin Freedberg for the following quote: "I believe if you think someone is doing something good, you should tell them." He left us knowing in his heart he had advanced the field of dermatology, given back education and time to the specialty, engaged in creative and innovative thought, and left a generation of dermatologists who are better because of him.

—Mark V. Dahl

## Irwin Freedberg: "Grandpa" to Generations of Dermatologists

Gerald S. Lazarus<sup>1</sup>

*Journal of Investigative Dermatology* (2006) 126, 520–521. doi:10.1038/sj.jid.5700105

Irwin Freedberg was a loving grandpa to his trainees. His own contributions to epithelial biology were significant, but far more profound was his encourage-

ment and mentorship of multiple generations of young academic dermatologists and skin researchers. He was also very committed to the future practi-

<sup>1</sup>Department of Dermatology, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Correspondence: Dr. Gerald S. Lazarus, Department of Dermatology, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, 4940 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21224, USA. Email: lazaruspumc@hotmail.com

ners he trained. It did not matter if you were a future professor or a practicing dermatological surgeon; Irwin was your advocate as long as you cared about becoming a good doctor. The power of his passion and the generosity of his caring irrevocably changed cutaneous biology and dermatological practice. His enduring impact on modern scientific dermatology and cutaneous biology is enormous.

For 37 years Irwin and I were colleagues, confidants, mutual psychotherapists, and each other's mentors. We met in 1968 when I became a dermatology resident at Harvard. My background included two years of internal medicine and three years of biochemical connective tissue research at the National Institutes of Health. Like Irwin, I had come to dermatology with a complex history that included a brush with my own mortality. Irwin, Howard Baden, Ken Arndt, Wally Clark, and Tom Fitzpatrick welcomed me, and my now very distinguished fellow residents, with warmth and generosity. But with Irwin and Ken there was just something extra special. Maybe it was because I was a bit older or because I had some research distinction, but this loving man embraced me as a junior colleague. With their characteristic generosity Irwin and Irene offered advice about life in Newton Centre and encouraged my wife and me to learn to ski so we could appreciate "the Boston approach to life."

The Beth Israel Hospital was amongst my earlier rotations, and Irwin was building a program at Longwood that coordinated activities at the Children's Hospital, the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, and the Boston Lying Inn. It was a time of exuberant energy and optimism as a select coterie of trainees overran the area in search of interesting dermatological, scientific, and medical problems. During my first rotation with Irwin at the Beth Israel, one of his long-term patients with dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa was in the terminal phase of renal failure. I had worked on collagenase in rheumatoid arthritis and human granulocytes at the National Institutes of Health at the same time that Arthur Eisen was making his observations on the role of this enzyme in epidermolysis bullosa. Irwin and I consid-

ered how this tragic patient's imminent demise might provide new information regarding the regulation of collagen catabolism in this devastating disease. However, my wife and I had booked, at Irwin's encouragement, an introductory ski week in Killington as the terminal event approached. Irwin announced, "You are going to Killington; Ken and I will do the autopsy and set up the tissue cultures if the patient dies. Get out of the clinic, go to the lab and set up your experiment so you can get out of here by 10 p.m.; the roads can be dangerous." That Sunday, Irwin Freedberg, associate professor of dermatology, and Kenneth Arndt, assistant professor of dermatology, spent four hours in the autopsy room at the Beth Israel Hospital while first-year resident Gerald Lazarus learned to ski on a beautiful mountain slope. This extraordinary commitment to the feeding and nurturing of the young is the hallmark of Irwin's career.

As the young Boston contingent matured, Irwin guided us through the meetings of the Society for Investigative Dermatology and the Tri-Societies in Atlantic City and Washington DC. During the presentation of interminable gels in dimly lit rooms, he would sidle up to a young presenter to assuage anxiety, congratulate on a job well done, or highlight important issues that "required further investigation." In the evenings Irwin would introduce us to all the appropriate people on the boardwalk and warn us about the danger that lurked in seedy bars, especially if there were Californians around. He would posture smartly in his tuxedo, advertising that we would also some day join the elite. The group expanded each year, and lifelong bonds cemented that became the very foundations of our personal and professional lives. At times of happiness and tragedy the group was also there to celebrate, support, and nurture each other. Decades of academic and professional leaders were the legacy of this unique period of the Society for Investigative Dermatology.

I would sometimes sit with Irwin at meetings and watch him take notes as he identified new opportunities for research. When he was really excited he would shake his head repeatedly and then smile broadly, his lips pursed. There

are many individuals at scientific meetings who believe they have been struck with a "totally brilliant creative insight." Some formulate the hypothesis and cagily solicit information from unsuspecting colleagues so they can develop a fundable program back in their own laboratories. Not Irwin. Almost immediately he would broadly advertise his thought to anyone within earshot. If the idea could make someone's career, especially if they were young, so much the better.

As the years passed, Irwin's commitment to broad scientific credibility extended. He was at the vanguard of opening dialogues with basic scientists across a wide variety of investigational disciplines. He was a prime mover in establishing interdisciplinary conferences to engage new approaches and technologies for the study of skin disease. Not only would he propose new initiatives, but he would also do the grinding work to implement the program. Some academics delight in the networking and consequent influence; Irwin performed these tasks to get the job done and to ensure that the deserving and the young were partners in the enterprise.

As the chair at Hopkins and New York University, Irwin was effective and innovative. He suffered the usual aggravations with a wry sense of bemusement, because his eye was always on the opportunity for trainees and young faculty. Individuals who were not going to be academics needed to shoulder their share of responsibility for the scientific and educational enterprise, because "you owe and that is the basis of your clinical success."

To the very end Irwin was focused on the future. Several months before his death he was beginning to write a dermatology training grant for New York University. According to his son Kenneth, he was discussing priorities with his oncologist, who suggested that if he really wanted to do a good job on the grant he should resign his chair and concentrate on the proposal. Two days later Irwin resigned his administrative role so he could work full time on the proposal.

I love Irwin. He has been a major force for good in my life, and he has touched so many others. To have been his friend makes life worth living.