



IN MEMORIAM

John W. Holaday, Ph.D.

R. Adron Harris¹*Neuropsychopharmacology* (2020) 45:437–437; <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41386-019-0558-6>

John W. Holaday, Ph.D., died on October 4, 2019, at age 74. He was Chairman, Founder, and CEO of DisposeRx Inc. and was attending a company meeting in Charlotte, NC, when he was tragically struck by a stray bullet. Previously he was co-founder of QRxPharma Limited, Medicis Pharmaceutical, EntreMed, and MaxCyte and held various positions as CEO and Chairman. John served on the Board of Directors of Exosis, Pixspan, and CytImmune Sciences.

He was born in New York but his family moved to Alabama where his father was Chairman of Educational Psychology at the University of Alabama. John obtained his B.S. and M.S. from the University of Alabama and his Ph.D. in Pharmacology from the University of California, San Francisco - School of Medicine in the laboratory of Dr. Horace Loh. John was an American College of Neuropsychopharmacology Fellow and a Fellow in Critical Care Medicine. His full and varied life included service at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research as a Captain, US Army, and later

as head of the Neuropharmacology Department. John was Adjunct Professor of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, as well as Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. He described himself as a serial entrepreneur, and the life science companies that he founded gained a collective market capitalization in excess of \$2 billion. John received numerous honors and awards for his development of biotechnology, including being selected for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2006 Hall of Fame. He held over 90 patents and published over 200 scientific articles and five books.

John's research interests at both Walter Reed and UCSF focused on endorphins, opioids, and neuroendocrinology. He was a pioneer in integrating endorphin function with physiological signaling systems as diverse as thermoregulation, cardiovascular function, and thyroid status. After leaving Walter Reed, he began his biotechnology career and was instrumental in a series of innovations mainly related to cancer therapeutics. Perhaps the most notable of these advances was the development of antiangiogenesis drugs while he was CEO of EntreMed. It is poignant that John's last business venture turned his focus again to opioids when he founded DisposeRx to help patients dispose of unused prescription opioids.

John was dedicated to science and to the application of science to public health. His big smile and bright blue eyes showed his excitement for life and reflected his intense intellect. I will always remember his love of puns and corny jokes. He brought much joy to those fortunate enough to have known him and worked with him. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

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¹Waggoner Center for Alcohol and Addiction Research, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, USA
Correspondence: R Adron Harris (harris@austin.utexas.edu)

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