

In Memoriam



S. Jan Behrman, MD (Dec. 9, 2009)

Samuel Jan Behrman died on Dec. 9, 2009 at the age of 89 in Palm Springs, California. Dr. Behrman was born in South Africa in 1920. Dr. Behrman was often referred to as “one of the era’s giants in the field of reproductive medicine,” and deservedly so. Throughout his long and productive career, Dr. Behrman made enduring contributions to the practice of obstetrics and gynecology. He was revered as an innovative surgeon, researcher, an unforgettable teacher, a superb clinician, an influential scholar and a supportive colleague.

Dr. Behrman received his medical degree in Cape Town, South Africa (1944) and completed his residency in Ob/Gyn at the Royal Maternity Hospital, Queens University, Belfast Ireland (1947). He also completed postgraduate training in Hammersmith, London (1948). In 1948, he completed a fellowship in Ob/Gyn and Public Health, resulting in a

Master's of Science from the University of Michigan. Following one year as associate research director of clinical research at Ortho Research Foundation in Jew Jersey, he returned to the University of Michigan where he remained on the faculty for 27 years.

Dr. Behrman excelled as a scholar, writer and editor. He contributed more than 150 peer-review articles to the professional literature and served on the editorial and advisory boards of national and international journals. His textbook, *Progress in Infertility*, (co-authored by Robert Kistner, MD), was a classic in the field. Perhaps the most lasting contribution he made was as one of the first introducers of laparoscopy in the United States. There is a famous story of him smuggling a laparoscope into the United States, taped to his leg, from Germany where he had studied with Kurt Semm, MD through Detroit Metropolitan Airport (clearly before metal scanners). He was internationally recognized for his research in sperm cryopreservation, immunology of infertility and pelvic endoscopy. He published evidence supporting the use of seat belts for pregnant women. Twice he received the Galen teaching award for best teacher amongst the entire faculty from senior medical students at the University of Michigan.

In 1977, he became Chairman of Ob/Gyn at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, MI, where he developed one of the first and finest IVF programs in the Midwest. In 1992, he moved to Tampa, FL where he taught medical students and residents at the University of South Florida before retiring. In 1993, the S. Jan Behrman Endowed Professorship in Reproductive Medicine was established at the University of Michigan.

Generations of students have vivid memories of Dr. Behrman, who's unconventional, but highly successful teaching methods earned him numerous awards. He was also in constant demand as a guest lecturer and visiting professor. The list of Dr. Behrman's professional affiliations is long and distinguished. He served as president of the American Fertility Society, the International Federation of Fertility Societies, and the Washtenaw Medical Society as well as honorary president of the British Fertility Society. He was a founding member of the Australian Fertility Society and he was an elected Fellow of the Royal College of

Obstetricians and Gynecologists in 1967. He was a charter member of numerous medical organizations worldwide and was a lifelong member of the New York Academy of Sciences.

He will be remembered for his excellence as a clinician, innovator, researcher, educator and mentor. Dr. Behrman is survived by his wife, Patrisha Ann and son Michael. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Andrea.

Submitted by Mark D. Pearlman, MD