

With sadness we report the recent death of our friend and colleague **Robert C. Moellering, Jr., MD**, a renowned infectious disease researcher and former Physician-in-Chief and Chairman of the Department of Medicine, who died Monday, Feb. 24. He was 77.

Trained as an infectious diseases specialist, Dr. Moellering was a leading researcher in the mechanisms of antibiotic action and bacterial resistance to antimicrobial agents. He held numerous leadership positions in the fields of infectious diseases and microbiology.

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center flags were lowered to half-staff in Dr. Moellering's honor on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 28 and March 1.

"He was an internationally-recognized authority on antibiotics, including how they work, how resistance to them develops and how to use them wisely in treating patients," said George Eliopoulos, MD, Department of Medicine, an infectious disease researcher who worked alongside Dr. Moellering for many years. "As a teacher, the breadth of his medical knowledge was awe-inspiring, and as a clinician, his advice was sought on difficult infectious diseases cases throughout the world."

Peter Weller, MD, Chief of Infectious Disease, added, "Bob's studies early on and throughout his career continued to shed light in terms of how antibiotics interact with VRE," or vancomycin-resistant enterococcus, a bacteria particularly known to cause infections in hospitals.

"Dr. Moellering was a consummate, caring clinician, whose astonishing expertise in clinical medicine and infectious diseases was matched with world leadership in responding to the relentless development of antibiotic resistance among pathogens," said Mark Zeidel, MD, Chief of Medicine. "He mentored many generations of superb clinicians and outstanding academic physicians. We will all miss him sorely."

Born in Lafayette, IN, he first came to Boston as a Harvard Medical School (HMS) student and he received his MD degree *cum laude* in 1962. He stayed in Boston as a medical intern and resident at Massachusetts General Hospital, where he was also a fellow in infectious diseases prior to joining the MGH staff and HMS faculty in 1970. He served as chairman of the Department of Medicine at the Deaconess Hospital from 1981 until its merger with Beth Israel Hospital in 1996. In 1998, he was named Physician-in-Chief and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at BIDMC. He also served as President and CEO of Harvard Medical Faculty Physicians at BIDMC. He was the Shields Warren-Mallinckrodt Professor of Medical Research at HMS from 1981 to 1998 and from 2005 onwards; from 1999 to 2005 he assumed the Herrman Blumgart Professorship of Medicine at HMS. He served on the BIDMC Board of Trustees from 1996 to 2005.

"Dr. Moellering was always a gentleman and was devoted to his interns and residents," Weller said. "A number of physicians who trained with him have gone on to have distinguished careers in infectious disease. His legacy lives on."

Among many awards and honors, he received the Garrod Medal of the British Society for Chemotherapy, the Hoechst-Roussel Award of the American Society for Microbiology and the Maxwell Finland Award for Scientific Achievement of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases. In 2008 he

was the honored recipient of the Alexander Fleming Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and in 2009 he received the Yen Memorial Award from the International Society for Chemotherapy. A prolific scholar, his research has been reported in more than 430 publications.

“A warm and generous colleague since house officer days, Bob Moellering exemplified the classical triple capability of patient care, teaching and research throughout his career,” said Mitchell Rabkin, MD, Distinguished Institute Scholar, Shapiro Institute for Education and Research. “He was impressive as well not only in shepherding the merger of our two former hospitals, but in smoothing their respective ways from ‘we-they’ to ‘us.’”

“When I think of all the serendipitous events that led to my ending up in this position, it’s almost mind-boggling,” Dr. Moellering told *The Lancet*, a leading medical journal, in a 1998 interview. “The odds of a little kid from the Midwest growing up to be doing what I’m doing are so small as to look almost ridiculous...if I had it to do all over again, I would write my ticket the same way.”

He leaves his beloved wife, Mary Jane Ferraro, and his children Anne Moellering and her spouse Susan Cunningham of San Francisco; Robert C. Moellering III of San Francisco; and Catherine Moellering and her fiancé, Anthony Buscemi of Brooklyn, NY. He also leaves siblings, Gen. John Moellering (Ret.) of Chapel Hill, NC; Carl Moellering of Ft. Wayne, IN; and Barbara Greschaw of Ann Arbor, MI.

A funeral service was celebrated in the Lutheran Church of the Newtons, 1310 Centre Street, Newton Centre, on Saturday, March 1 at 1 p.m., followed by interment in Newton Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a fellowship being established at BIDMC in Dr. Moellering's memory. Please make checks payable to "Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center", include "Robert C. Moellering, Jr., MD" in the check memo line and mail to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Attn: Development, 330 Brookline Avenue, Boston, MA 02215. Donations in his memory may also be made to the Lutheran Church of the Newtons, 1310 Centre Street, Newton, MA 02459.

Materials from the Ruth and David Freiman Archives at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center were used in preparing this In Memoriam message.