Preface: John L. Fahey: Pioneer in New Disciplines of Human Immunology

This special issue, in honor of Professor John L. Fahey, contains contributions from several investigators who had the privilege of working with Dr. Fahey during his long and productive career. Dr. Fahey passed away suddenly in August of 2014, at the age of 89.

John L. Fahey had an exceptionally vigorous and rich career in immunology, one that was punctuated by the establishment of major initiatives in several key areas of science and medicine that resulted in contributions of great impact. His initial work, done mostly at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), was in humoral immunology and included the discovery of immunoglobulin D (IgD)1 and the characterization of important classes and subclasses of human and murine immunoglobulins. He also made many early contributions to tumor immunology.

Dr. Fahey joined the faculty of the David Geffen School of Medicine (then the University of California, Los Angeles [UCLA] School of Medicine) in 1971 as professor and chair of the department of microbiology and immunology and worked at UCLA until his retirement a few years ago. While there, he created an environment that allowed many young investigators to flourish and that promoted interactions between the clinic and the laboratory, long before translational research was widely advocated.

Dr. Fahey was one of the first investigators to define acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and made many scientific and organizational contributions promoting HIV/AIDS research at UCLA, nationally, and internationally. He published nearly 100 papers on HIV/AIDS alone, part of an illustrious career that also included major contributions to research in immunology, aging, cancer, and medicine. Dr. Fahey’s team at UCLA was responsible for much of the initial work that characterized immune system changes seen in HIV-infected individuals; his first papers in AIDS research were published in 1983, shortly after the original identification of the clinical syndrome at UCLA, and included publications in *The Lancet*2 and *The New England Journal of Medicine*.3 In addition to this, Dr. Fahey had formative roles in the establishment of the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study (MACS), UCLA AIDS Institute, Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, and Cousins Center for Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI). He helped found and was the first president of the Clinical Immunology Society.

Dr. Fahey also was very active in promoting the development of immunology research in resource-limited countries, including the development of the UCLA/Fogarty AIDS International Training and Research Program. His work in this area, especially in promoting interactions with colleagues in India, continued nearly until the time of his death.

Clearly, John Fahey was a visionary and a courageous individual who did not hesitate to face issues of great importance, even when his efforts were (initially) unappreciated by others. He championed HIV/AIDS research before most others recognized the magnitude of the AIDS problem, even before funding agencies were willing to support work in this area. Similarly, he was willing to explore and support work in PNI during its most formative stages, before the mechanistic underpinnings of mind–body interactions had begun to be defined. He promoted translational research in an era when such work was often viewed with suspicion and disdain by laboratory scientists. We will remember him for his singular vision, enthusiasm, and leadership in these and other areas of science.

We also will remember Dr. Fahey as an exceptional mentor. He supported, trained, led, and encouraged many investigators, scores of which have gone on to productive research careers across the world. Those of us who were fortunate to have worked with him will remember him for his ability to bring out the best in each of us and will continue to call on lessons learned from him until the end of our own careers.
REFERENCES


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