MEMORIAL

PETER CAH NERS HARPEL
1936–2003

Peter Cahners Harpel’s death at age 67 following unsuccessful cardiac surgery closed an academic career that can be said to begin with his education at the Andover Academy, Harvard College and Harvard Medical School continued at the medical school of Cornell University
and as an Attending Physician of the New York Hospital and concluded with his appointment at Mt. Sinai.

His initial appointment at Cornell was as an intern on the Cornell Medical Division at Bellevue Hospital, then two years at Memorial Hospital, now Sloan-Kettering Memorial Hospital. It was during this time that he was a Post-Doctoral Fellow and then a Research Scholar of the American Cancer Society, which was followed by an NIH Career Development Award. He then joined the faculty of Cornell as an Instructor in Medicine where he advanced to the rank of Professor. In 1990 he moved from Manhattan’s mid-town east side to the upper Manhattan east side as the Albert A. and Vera G. List Professor of Medicine and chief Division of Hematology with a concurrent appointment as Professor of Biochemistry at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Mt Sinai had a long tradition of excellence in hematology stemming from the time of Nathan Rosenthal in the 1930’s and 1940’s, and Louis Wasserman from the 1950’s to the 1980’s.

When he began his career hematology can already be said to been subdivided into 3 sub-fields, cellular hematology, which in turn began to split into benign and malignant fields, coagulation and blood banking each with an increasing separate identity. He began his research in coagulation and continued in that subspecialty during his career. He directed the Coagulation Laboratory at Cornell’s teaching hospital New York Hospital. At Cornell and at Mt. Sinai he was the Co-Principle Investigator of National Heart Blood LUNG (NHBLI) Institute supported Specialized Centers of Research, at Cornell in Thrombosis and at Mt. Sinai in Hemostasis.

He served on several committees of the American Heart Association that were concerned with thrombosis and coagulation and the Board of Directors. In the American Society of Hematology he chaired the Hemostasis and Thrombosis Committees. He was the President of the New York Society for the Study of Blood, the nation’s oldest hematology society. He was an American Cancer Society Fellow and a Research Scholar and NIH Career Development Awardee.

Editorial Board memberships included the Journal of Biological Chemistry.

Throughout his career he continued to publish scholarly papers the last posthumously in 2004 in Blood 103, 1296-304.—“Chemokine receptor-8 (CCR8) mediates human smooth muscle chemotaxis and metalloproteinase-2 secretion.”

The title in many respects reflects his long time scientific interests—.

He was a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation,
the Association of American Physicians and the American Clinical and Climatological Association, in whose Transactions this Memorial is published.

Some of us who were friends and colleagues did not know that outside of medicine he was an accomplished athlete. He was selected for the 1957 All-American College Track and Field Team, was elected to the Harvard Varsity Club Hall of Fame, and held the University record in the 16-pound hammer throw.

The Board of Governors of the Beach Point Club, in the New York Times obituary section of January 7, 2004, noted his service as their Commodore.

He leaves his wife Louise, his children, John who is following in his footsteps in hematology at Cornell, Robert and Elizabeth.

Nathaniel I. Berlin, M.D.