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J Dent Res 93(7):613-615, 2014

Dr. Barnett Levy, former president of the International Association for Dental Research (1955-1956) and former editor of the *Journal of Dental Research* (1976-1982), peacefully departed this life on March 7, 2014, at the age of 97 years. "Bar" filled this extraordinary lifetime with profound contributions to science, with a dedication to professional service, and with a special gift of mentoring. A man who was uniquely one of a kind, who challenged convention, and who filled his life with passion, compassion, and humor, Bar cared about people in a way that made everyone who knew him the better for the experience.

Dr. Bar Levy's remarkable career and his enduring influence on science, teaching, professional service, and mentoring have been previously documented (Robinson, 1988; Robertson and O'Neill, 1997; Rule and Bebeau, 2001). In brief, Dr. Levy

A Tribute to the Life of Dr. Barnett M. Levy

received his AB and DDS degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and an MS degree in bacteriology and pathology from the Medical College of Virginia. He held teaching and research positions at the Medical College of Virginia and Washington University (St. Louis) School of Dentistry. He was named chief of dental staff at St. Louis City Hospital. In 1949, he joined the Columbia University School of Dental and Oral Surgery, where he established an international reputation for innovative approaches to research in oral carcinogenesis, oral developmental anomalies, and the relationships between dental and systemic diseases. His highly regarded textbook on oral pathology, coauthored with Drs. William Shafer and Maynard K. Hine, was an essential reference for many years. Dr. Levy's contributions to professional service were also extraordinary. In addition to his service to the American Association for Dental Research and the International Association for Dental Research, Dr. Levy served as president of the American Board of Pathology, chaired the National Institute of Dental Research Dental Study Section, and was a member of the Committee on Dentistry of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Advisory Council on Dental Research, and the Conference Board of the Fulbright Screening Committee. He holds many honors for excellence in teaching, scholarship in research, and extensive service to the community.

In what Bar described as his Texas Odyssey, he moved to the University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston as professor of pathology in 1957 and established the University of Texas Dental Science Institute. He also held joint appointments as adjunct professor of veterinary anatomy at Texas A&M University and adjunct foundation scientist at Southwest Foundation for Research and Education. In addition, Dr. Levy was a major force in establishing the campuswide University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, serving as its faculty president from 1982 to 1983. Through his research and tutelage of many graduate students, Bar established a strong presence for dental research on the Texas Medical Center campus. In his progress report of the first 5 years of the Dental Science Institute, Bar describes its programs that emphasized the holistic approach to research. He wrote, "Dental science cannot stand independently from general science, nor can the mouth

DOI: 10.1177/0022034514537275

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be divorced from the rest of the universe.” He focused on the fact that people were living longer and were therefore plagued by chronic and debilitating ailments, foremost among those being dental caries and periodontal disease. He felt that the study and progress toward preventing and/or alleviating those diseases lay in a group approach in which the talents, capabilities, imaginations, and interests of each investigator were coordinated toward a common goal. In a short period of 5 years, he had assembled a multidisciplinary team of pioneer researchers, including Drs. John K. Hampton, A. Cecil Taylor, Willard Smith, Samuel Dreizen, James Klinkhamer, John Ennever, John Simpson, Lee Brown, Lawrence Friedman, Joseph Streckfuss, and Roy Jacob. This was the activity of a thriving Dental Science Institute, which for more than 20 years received continuous funding from the National Institutes of Health while attracting researchers and trainees worldwide.

Bar’s magnetic personality and caring nature attracted a broad range of highly productive young scientists and students. Dr. Bruce Mackler writes,

He had the unique qualities of being both magnanimous in his encouragement of those striving forward in academics and quite tolerant of their individualities. Through his encouragement to ask questions and to challenge generally acceptable scientific ideas, his students and young faculty matured to make contributions in their respective fields in dentistry and science in general. It was both a privilege to work with Bar and also call him a friend and mentor.

Dr. Paul Robertson remembered Bar’s high standards of expectation combined with a consistently kind and thoughtful concern about the professional and personal needs of investigators for whom he was responsible. Dr. Peggy O’Neill, his first postdoctoral fellow, writes that of all the accolades, accomplishments, and titles, the one that suits Barnet Levy the best is that of mentor—the classic role as advisor, guide, and teacher. He was a humble man, and his philosophy of teaching lies in a quote from him:

Most of my students went on to make a much greater contribution to dental science than I could have or did. That, I think, is what teaching is all about. Teachers bend so the student or young colleague can stand on their shoulders. Then the teacher straightens up so the student can reach the bottom rung of their ladder to success.

Dr. Lawrence Tabak recalls that he was introduced to Bar by the late Dr. Irwin D. Mandel, who had described Bar as his mentor and enduring friend. Bar gave Dr. Mandel’s research career a boost: “He became my model as a mentor for dental research. He was broad-based scientifically, interested in everything and everybody, and a model collaborator, both with the dental and basic sciences and with medical colleagues” (Rule and Bebeau, 2001). Dr. Rena D’Souza was Bar’s last PhD student, and she remembers how being mentored by Bar helped her grow both professionally and personally: “In reminiscing about his days as

an amateur boxer in Brooklyn, Bar described how victories over his opponents did not satisfy him—that somehow advancing at the expense of others was not a rewarding experience for him.” This, she states, is the most valuable lesson of life that he taught her and one that she witnessed him practice in his role as researcher, administrator, and mentor to many.

Numerous colleagues of Barnet Levy sent notes expressing their sadness at his passing but joy and love for the time that they had together. There are too many to list here, but we paraphrase letters from former presidents of the International Association for Dental Research and the American Association for Dental Research that reflect memories of all who knew him. Dr. Harold Slavkin writes,

Bar was true to his convictions, highly creative, and was endowed with many scientific, artistic, and humanistic talents. He had an extraordinary gift to listen and engage with young people as well as the elderly. He held a passion for “doing science” and always projected compassion for the underserved. He was very special to us and will be missed by many others.

Drs. John and Deborah Greenspan remembered the positive influence that Bar had on both their lives and the love they felt for him. They noted that Bar helped direct many in dentistry to pursue science and leadership and that his mentees have made enormous contributions, as did he in a life well lived. Dr. Marc Heft noted that Bar was a considerate and compassionate human being: “When I think of Bar with his distinctive bow ties, his earring, and twinkle in his eye, I just smile.” Dr. Richard Ranney wrote that, in addition to discussions on science, time spent with Bar meant enjoying a marvelous time, great restaurants, and wonderful fellowship: “He was a beautifully kind, gentle, and generous person.” Dr. Roy Page observed,

Over the years, as we worked together on many varied occasions, I came to have an enormous respect and high regard for his insights, original thinking, and the depth and breadth of his knowledge. He had an important and major influence on my career. He had a lasting impact on periodontics and dentistry but, most of all, the people in his gentle company.

In 1982, Dr. Levy was appointed to the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, and was reunited with Paul Robertson at the University of California, San Francisco, to establish a Geriatric Oral Health Center. He went on to spend 5 years in Mexico at Universidad Autonoma de Mexico, supporting and advising master and PhD students. Professor Arzate reports that he gave the School of Dentistry all his books and journals to establish a library, which bears his name and a quote: “If you don’t share science, there is no meaning to it.” Bar returned to Mexico City, generously sharing his enthusiasm for dental research with countless mentees. In addition, Bar hiked parts of the Appalachian Trail, experimented with hang gliding, climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, and then returned to Columbia University in New York, where he was still lecturing into his 90th year. In his

retirement years, Bar stayed busy with many of his artistic pursuits—mosaics, stained-glass artwork, wood carving, jewelry, and painting. Rena D'Souza visited Bar at his home in Englewood in 2012: "Time stood still for me that last magical evening with Bar. It is the gentle touch with those he had adopted, a touch that transcended the professional, extending to our personal lives, our problems, and our successes that made Bar a truly remarkable person."

It is with heavy hearts that we bid good-bye to an amazing man, though our spirits are lightened by the gifts he left behind—gifts that are critical to the future of teaching and research in all disciplines and that must not be lost in the increasingly complex and competitive academic environment in which we live today. For, like Bar Levy, we should all have the opportunity to leave the world a better place than we found it—to look back on a life's successful work and say

that whatever I am and whatever I became was positively influenced by a caring mentor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are grateful for all those who wrote to honor the memory of Dr. Barnet M. Levy.

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