

# Professor William L. Epstein

1925-2006

William Epstein, Emeritus Professor of Dermatology at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) died on 27th May 2006 (at the age of 80 years) after a period of failing health. Bill, or 'Dr Bill' as he was popularly and universally called belonged to the remarkable Epstein Dermatological family in the San Francisco Bay area. His father Norman was the inaugural Professor of Dermatology; his uncle and nephew (Ervin Epstein, Senior and Junior) and

his brother John have all made national and international contributions to the speciality. Bill completed his residency at the University of Pennsylvania (1953 – 56) where he came under the influence of Albert Kligman. Thereafter Bill pursued an academic career in Dermatology with considerable zest and enthusiasm. Bill was always very much an 'ideas' man and often challenged the dogma of the day. Returning to San Francisco soon after completing



his training Bill became a full Professor in 1969 and chaired the department from 1974 – 1985. Bill's research interests were considerable but he made innovative and important contributions in the fields of epithelioid cell granulomas; poison oak/ivy dermatitis; effects of ultraviolet radiation on skin; chemistry and dermatotoxicity of allergenic plants. Durings his career he published more than 550 manuscripts. Nationally Bill served as President of the Society of Investigative Dermatology in 1985. Internationally he was the Dohi lecturer at the Japanese Dermatological Association in 1982

and later received the Emperor Japan Award (medal of Honour).

I remain particularly indebted to Bill when he accepted me in his department as Dowling (Fulbright) Travelling Fellow in 1972-73. Having completed training in dermatopathology I found UCSF ideal for learning about experimental pathology techniques. Bill and his close colleague Kimie Fukuyama provided an ideal working and social environment in the department. This whole working experience enabled me to interact with many American and Japanese colleagues, many of whom are still friends today. In 1973

Bill, Kimie and others from Stanford formed the Pacific Skin Research Group and I became an inaugural member. This remarkable club has met variously in USA, Japan and several European countries and has enabled the spirit of academic dermatological co-operations to continue.

Bill will be long remembered as a kindly, lively character who did much to stimulate academic dermatology in his long career.

**Professor Martin Black**

London