

## Dr. Richard M. Hays – An Einstein Legend If There Ever Was

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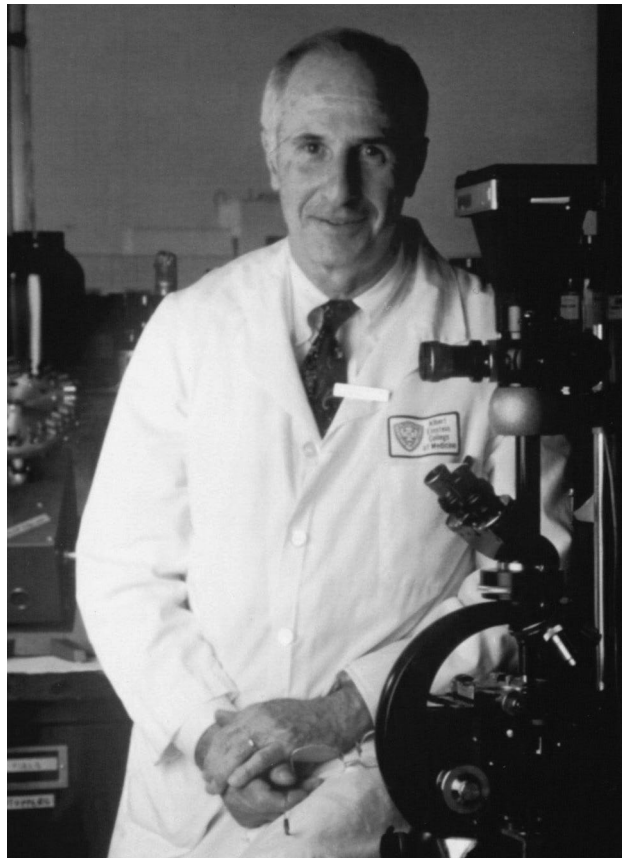
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**M**y first memory of Dr. Richard Hays is of him sitting on the stage of Robbins auditorium delivering a lecture on renal physiology. At that time, I did not realize that medicine could be taught with such kindness and compassion. A majority of my class did not go into nephrology, but we all loved him as a teacher. He regarded students highly, and would listen to their every interest with the seriousness that one would grant any renowned scientist. He understood and practiced the idea that curiosity kept your mind and heart young. For that reason, I had always felt that Dr. Hays harbored an uncanny youth about him, and wished to catch a bit of it when he was around.

One quality no one can deny Dr. Hays is his persistence. He was especially dedicated to causes he thought would benefit Einstein, an institution he held dear to his heart. One such example was how hard he fought to keep a close relationship between the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Jacobi Medical Center. For non-academic reasons, this relationship was weakened and resulted in the break-up of the renal division that he led for 9 years. He had fought tirelessly to bring them back together despite administrative obstacles. We loved that he never gave up, even when we did.

In many ways, Dr. Hays was a renaissance man. You could not find a soul more interested in life and living. He was a poet, gracing every family occasion with an original poem. He was a musician, complementing his warm home of a lovely wife and four exceptional children with singing and instrument playing. He was an athlete, leading his high school football team as captain, and had a short (very short) career boxing when he served in the Army Air Force. And of course he was a physician-scientist.

His academic career that would eventually lead him to the field of medicine began at distinguished institutions. He studied at Harvard College and majored in anthropology as an undergraduate student. This was followed by his medical school education at the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons where he first became intrigued by the physiology of the kidney. His residency in Internal Medicine was completed at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. His two fellowships, the first under Dr. William Schwartz at the Tufts-New England Center Hospital, and a very significant second under Dr. Alexander Leaf at the Massachusetts General Hospital launched his scientific career. We were fortunate that he chose to join the Einstein faculty in 1960. In the following two decades, Dr. Hays published ground-



**Figure 1 | Richard M. Hays, MD.**

breaking research on mechanisms of osmotic water flow that would eventually lead to the discovery of aquaporins. He continued to ponder over water and sodium disorders throughout his career and into retirement. To that end, he devoted much of his time and passion to the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory in Maine, a place that embraces the bold missions of promoting research and education in marine organisms, fostering an understanding of the environment, while advancing human health. He joined the Laboratory as a medical student in 1952, and became its Director from 1976-1978.

Towards the latter half of Dr. Hays' career, he focused on medical education. Constantly rethinking how we teach students, he even founded the Division of Education at Einstein. He was not afraid of change and the struggles that may come with them. Empowering students to teach not only themselves but the faculty was a goal of his. Once

more, he treated students with the respect that is not always so visible in our traditional educational hierarchy. Not surprisingly, he was lauded with teaching awards year after year. Dr. Hays was inducted in the Leo M. Davidoff Society in 1995 and received its Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Teaching in 2003.

What will be the legacy of Dr. Hays? Will it be that of a beloved teacher, a committed scientist, or a devoted family man? Will it be of an activist, fighting the powers-that-be for ideas that he firmly believed in? The answer is undoubtedly different for every person. I remember Dr. Hays as a man who embodies the best of human character. He was a force of nature with the deepest heart and the utmost integrity. I remember Dr. Hays as someone whom I wish to aspire to. If I can live the way he lived and love the way he loved, I cannot and will not ask for more. I remember Dr. Hays as the figure on the stage of Robbins auditorium sitting so invitingly as he introduced the world of nephrology to a group of bewildered students, and I miss him dearly.

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**Conflict of Interest Disclosures**

The author has completed and submitted the ICMJE Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest. No conflicts were noted.