

A Special Tribute to Dr. Noel Rose from Dr. Bruce Rabin

If a meaningful life is defined as one that contributes to the betterment of others, Noel Rose had an extremely meaningful life.

Noel was meaningful to me. In the summer of 1959 Noel offered me, an 18 year old kid, a job washing glassware and holding experimental animals in his lab at what was then the University of Buffalo. Since my first day he became my life-long role model. I wanted to be like him and I'm sure I was not the only one who modeled themselves after Noel. He was kind, thoughtful, gentle, smart, patient, and successful. Who wouldn't want to be like him. Of course, Noel was my mentor for my doctoral studies. I graduated from SUNY Buffalo, in 1969 with an MD and PhD degree (just like Noel).

He was meaningful to his family as a wonderful husband and father. I had many opportunities to observe him in that role from 1959-1969, often as a house-sitter when they went on vacation.

Noel was a meaningful teacher and mentor for many over the approximately 69 years he was in the academic world. The many young (and some not so young) scientists he trained, who made and are making their own contributions to medicine, are one of his most significant accomplishments.

Noel was a meaningful research scientist who early on recognized the potential importance of autoimmune responses to the quality of health. The many obituaries that have been written provide a thorough review of his scientific accomplishments and I refer you to these. Something that you will not read in the numerous obituaries is the specific event that opened the door to the realization that he along with the Witebsky group (Dr. Witebsky was Chair of the Department of Microbiology at the University of Buffalo) had created an autoimmune disease. In this study, rabbits had one lobe of their thyroid removed which was ground up and injected back into the same rabbit in complete Freund's adjuvant. Eventually the rabbit was sacrificed, the remaining lobe of the thyroid removed, and slides prepared. No one in the Witebsky group knew how to interpret what they saw under the microscope. So the slide was walked down the corridor to the Department of Pathology and shown to the pathologist, Dr. Kornel Terplan. Dr. Terplan looked at the slide and told them that they had given him tissue from a patient with Hashimoto's thyroiditis. Dr. Terplan had difficulty accepting that this was tissue from a rabbit, but when they convinced him the whole field of autoimmune disease was opened. Just imagine the excitement that took place.

Noel was a meaningful administrative leader in the academic world and with scientific organizations that promoted study and understanding of the role of the immune process in causing disease. Of particular importance to us are his efforts to establish the Association of Medical Laboratory Immunologists. He recognized the need for an organization that would bring the professional and technical workers in medical laboratory immunology together. This helped to move science and research to real-world applications We all thank him for this.

Noel was a special man. I, along with many others, learned from him and miss him.

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