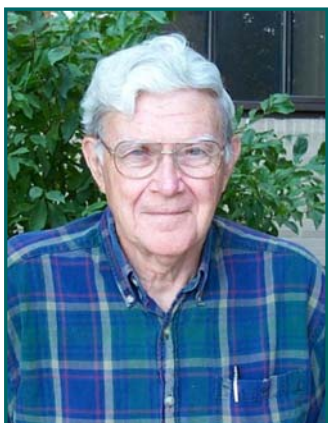


OBITUARY



Bert Nicholas La Du, Jr. , M.D., Ph.D.
1920 – 2005

Dr. Bert N. La Du, Professor Emeritus of Pharmacology at the University of Michigan, died January 30, 2005. Dr. La Du was President of ASPET from 1978-1979.

Born in Lansing, Michigan, Bert Nichols La Du, Jr. received his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Michigan State College in 1943 and earned an M.D. from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1945. After an Internship at Rochester General Hospital in Rochester, New York, and a year as a Teaching Assistant in the Michigan State Department of Biochemistry, he joined the Department of Biochemistry at the University of California in Berkeley, where he received his Ph.D. degree in 1952.

From 1950 until 1963, Dr. La Du was associated with the National Institutes of Health, stationed first as a Surgeon at Goldwater Memorial Hospital Research Service in New York, and the National Heart Institute, and later as Medical Director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases. After a sabbatical year at the Galton Laboratory of University College in London, Dr. La Du became Chairman of the Department of Pharmacology at New York University in 1963.

Dr. La Du moved from New York to Michigan in 1974, where he served as Chairman of the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Michigan from 1974-80, and then returned to full-time research and teaching in the Department. He retired officially in 1989 and became Professor Emeritus of Pharmacology. In retirement, he continued to be an active, funded investigator with recent grants from the Michigan Life Sciences Corridor Fund and a research contract with the University of Texas.

Throughout his scientific career, Dr. La Du's primary research interests were the biochemistry of drug metabolism and pharmacogenetics. He was an early leader of research on human inborn errors of amino acid metabolism. He is recognized internationally as one of the "founding fathers" of pharmacogenetics. For the past 35 years Dr. La Du's research has focused on the effects of heredity on drug metabolism and response. He made major contributions to the understanding of genetic variants of the serum cholinesterase enzymes in those human individuals who are unusually susceptible to the actions of succinylcholine. In recognition of his pioneering work, the 1st International Conference on Paraoxonases: Basic and Clinical Directions of Current Research was held in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan in April 2004.

Dr. La Du is survived by his wife of 58 years, Catherine Shilson La Du; his sister, Carol; four daughters, Libby, Mary, Anne and Jane; six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

ASPET notes with sympathy the passing of the following members:

Julius C. Allen

Edward D. Freis

Domingo M. Aviado

David Kupfer

Julius Axelrod

Bert N. La Du

Allan D. Bass

Edward Majchrowicz

Aldo N. Corbascio

W. Leigh Thompson

Vernon G. Vernier

