

## *In Memoriam*

### A tribute to Professor Jack W. Coburn, MD 1932-2004



In 1997, the *Portuguese Journal of Nephrology and Hypertension* published its first supplement entirely devoted to renal osteodystrophy. At that time, in addition to writing one of the articles, Professor Coburn also gave me the benefit of his considerable expertise and knowledge to organise the project.

Sadly, this current supplement has been created without any help or written article from him. Professor Coburn was further connected with our Journal as he was a distinguished member of the International Editorial Board for 19 years, from the journal's very beginning, and he published several articles in it during this time.

Although Jack left us 18 months ago on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004, I felt as Editor-in-Chief of this official Journal of the Portuguese Society of Nephrology that this supplement given over to renal osteodystrophy, Professor Coburn's main area of interest, was the best forum and the right moment to honour his memory.

A native Californian and UCLA graduate, Professor Coburn, after his initial training in Seattle, developed his career at UCLA, becoming Professor of Medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine and Chief of Nephrology at the Wadsworth VA Medical Center, a hospital affiliated with UCLA.

Professor Coburn leaves a legacy of a vast and distinguished body of work in divalent cation and bone metabolism, and was the first investigator to receive the Frederic C. Bartter Award for research by the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research. Working alongside such important names as Charles Kleeman, Shaul Massry and William G. Goodman

among others, he made clear the complex relationship between calcium, phosphate, vitamin D, parathyroid hormone and the kidneys. He produced the first studies demonstrating the benefits of calcitriol in patients with chronic kidney disease and his most recent clinical research was devoted to suppressing secondary hyperparathyroidism by the use of calcimimetic agents and new vitamin D analogs.

The vital importance of his scientific work was recognised just a few months before he passed away, when the American Society of Nephrology presented him with the Belding H. Scribner Award.

In addition to being a skilled physician and dedicated researcher, Professor Coburn was a gifted communicator. An inspired and inspiring teacher and speaker, he instilled a love of and respect for Nephrology in the dozens of fellows from all over the world whom he taught, and all of whom remember him with gratitude for the effect he had on their lives. Portuguese Nephrology is included, as Professor Joao M. Frazao was fully trained by him as a fellow in Nephrology at UCLA in the 1990s.

Jack's life was not all work. An intelligent and cultured man, he was, as many of you know, an expert wine connoisseur with a tremendous passion for life and friendship. His colleagues worldwide remember that the Los Angeles house of this generous and friendly man was always open to host visitors and friends. He will remain forever in our hearts.

Jack is survived by his devoted wife Kathy, his three lovely daughters, Elizabeth, Laurel and Rachel, his sons-in-law and his grand-children, to whom I take this opportunity to express again the sincere condolences of all his Portuguese friends.

*Fernando Carrera, MD*  
Editor-in-Chief