

Halberg, Dr. Franz



On Sunday June 9, 2013, a great scientist and exceptional human being left us. Franz Halberg's passing shy of his 94th birthday leaves a void that cannot be filled. He will be remembered for founding the fields of chronobiology, chronomics and chronobioethics. His accomplishments are summarized in his over 3,400 scientific publications, in cooperation with colleagues from around the world. He coined the term circadian, after documenting that biologic rhythms tip the scale between health and disease and even between life and death. Many around the world call him their mentor and turned to him for advice, from study design and data analysis to the interpretation of results in the time dimension. His work earned him numerous awards, apart from holding professorships in Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, Physiology, Biology, Bioengineering and Oral Medicine at the University of Minnesota, he received honorary doctorates from the

University of Montpellier (France), Ferrara (Italy), Tyumen (Siberia), Brno (Czech Republic), L'Aquila (Italy), and most recently People's Friendship University of Russia (Moscow, Russia). Born on July 5, 1919 in Romania, Franz Halberg was brought by the US government from post-war Austria to Harvard Medical School, where he held a World Health Organization fellowship. In 1949, he moved to the University of Minnesota, which saw his breakthrough experiments that led to the important discovery of circadian (about 24-hour) rhythms, and then built in cycles of many other lengths, such as weekly, monthly, yearly, and longer solar and other cycles. He discovered that these cycles are innate and can be manipulated by environmental synchronizers. He went on to document their importance in clinical medicine, concentrating on preventive cardiology and individually timed cardiology and cancer treatment. At 93 years of age and still active 7 days a week in the Halberg Chronobiology Center at the University of Minnesota, he is the last recipient of a lifetime career award from the National Institutes of Health. He was a trail blazer who leaves a remarkable legacy.

Memorials are preferred to the Halberg Center for Chronobiology, University of Minnesota Foundation, PO Box 860266, Minneapolis MN 55486-0226.