

World-Renowned Expert on Amyloidosis Dies

David Seldin was also a Renaissance man

By Susan Seligson

David Seldin was a beloved teacher and clinician and a world-renowned expert on amyloidosis, a rare disease caused by abnormal protein buildup in blood and other tissues that is linked to many progressive illnesses, including cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

Seldin, the Wesley and Charlotte Skinner Professor for Research in Amyloidosis and a School of Medicine professor of medicine and microbiology, became director of the BU Amyloidosis Center in 2007 and chief of the section of hematology-oncology at Boston Medical Center (BMC) the following year.

He died of prostate cancer on June 27, 2015, at age 58.

"Boston University School of Medicine has lost a distinguished professor, a brilliant investigator, an exceptional teacher, and a friend," says Karen Antman, dean of MED and provost of the Medical Campus. "David had a marvelous dry wit

and was a master of irony, which he delivered with just a hint of a smile as he waited for others to get the joke. He loved good, freewheeling critical science discussions, but also coached, supported, and mentored students and junior faculty. David's patients loved him. He provided expertise based on his extensive experience with amyloidosis, a disease that other physicians saw perhaps once in their careers. He treated patients with warmth and care, while his research results provided hope. We will all miss him."

A 1978 graduate of Harvard College, Seldin earned an MD and a PhD from Harvard Medical School in 1986. He arrived at BU School of Medicine in 1994 as an assistant professor of medicine and went on to teach in a number of departments. His work as a researcher and clinician earned him many fellowships and grants and has been supported by the Ameri-



FRED SWAY

David Seldin was a brilliant scientist and clinician who took pleasure in working with those just beginning their careers in medicine, says Martha Skinner, Amyloidosis Center director of special projects. "His special love was students and young scientists," she says. "He had an amazing ability to critique their work respectfully and encourage them to strive for the best."

can Society of Clinical Oncology, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the Avon Foundation, the Department of Defense, the Wildflower Foundation, the Stewart Endowment Fund, the US Health Resources and Services Administration, the Institute of Medicine, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Seldin's colleagues describe him as a passionate Renaissance man who loved to spend time outdoors hiking and skiing, and at the beach with his family. He was also an avid scuba diver for many years, a wine connoisseur with his own wine cellar, and an LP record collector and audiophile who built his own stereo system. But he will be remembered best

at Boston Medical Center as a generous mentor known for his kindness to nurses, patients, and his colleagues.

"David was a compassionate physician, an accomplished researcher and mentor, and a wonderful person," says Kate Walsh, BMC president and CEO. "His leadership and advocacy in the area of amyloidosis research and treatment are known across the country and the world, and he will be greatly missed by all his colleagues and patients at BMC."

Martha Skinner, Amyloidosis Center director of special projects, says Seldin was a brilliant scientist and clinician who took pleasure in working with those just beginning their careers in medicine. "His special love was students and young scientists; he had an amazing ability to critique their work respectfully and encourage them to strive for the best," says Skinner. "In fact, David had an extraordinary talent for inspiring his colleagues to excel, and he rarely took any credit for himself. He is one of the best colleagues I have ever had."

Seldin and his colleagues developed a publicly available amyloidogenic pro-

◆ Robert Hausman helped develop a strong neurobiology curriculum at the University. “Before Rob arrived, there were practically no neuroscience courses at BU,” says Bill Eldred, a CAS biology professor.

tein database as well as an amyloidosis model used to test novel therapies. He collaborated with researchers all over the world, and devoted a large portion of his time to training and mentoring a generation of physicians and postdoctoral and predoctoral fellows in the conduct of clinical, laboratory, and translational research. He served on numerous thesis committees.

“David will be remembered by our community as a beacon of hope for his patients and inspiration for his trainees, and for his colleagues’ admiration,” says David Coleman, Wade Professor and chair of the department of medicine and chief of the BMC division of medicine. “He has led in defining new therapies for amyloidosis and in serving our institution with great distinction. David’s generosity, acumen, and brilliance have illuminated our department for over two decades. His example as a compassionate and pioneering physician scientist, friend, and colleague will endure forever at Boston University School of Medicine and Boston Medical Center.”

Among his many honors, Seldin was appointed to the Wesley

and Charlotte Skinner Professorship for Research in Amyloidosis in 2014. He had been a member of an NIH study section and grant and program review panels for Canada, Greece, the United Kingdom, and Singapore. He was the first director of the graduate program in molecular medicine in the Division of Graduate Medical Sciences and established graduate courses in cancer biology. In addition, he appeared on many “Best Doctors” lists. He served on the scientific advisory board of the Amyloidosis Foundation and on the board of the International Society of Amyloidosis and was an associate editor of *Amyloid: The Journal of Protein Folding Disorders*.

Amyloidosis Center colleague Vaishali Sanchorawala, a MED professor of medicine, sums up Seldin’s legacy: “David Seldin—where brilliance met kindness.”

To make a gift in memory of David Seldin, contact the School of Medicine’s development office at 617-638-4570 or busmdev@bu.edu. Donations will be used to establish an endowed professorship in Seldin’s name in the MED department of medicine.



KALIMAN ZABARSKY

Vivacious Lecturer, Dedicated Researcher

CAS’ Robert Hausman was the cornerstone of undergraduate cell and molecular biology curricula

By Mara Sassoon

Robert Hausman knew how to get his students’ attention. During lectures on cell biology, he often climbed onto desks and chairs. He carried a measuring stick, which he occasionally slapped on desks to emphasize a point. “Rob was such a vivacious lecturer,” says Dean Tolan, a College of Arts & Sciences professor of biology, who had worked with Hausman. “I was always fascinated by his teaching style.”

Hausman, a CAS professor of biology, so loved teaching that he was determined to return to the classroom after a devastating injury in October 2010. He fell off a ladder at his home, an accident that left him a quadriplegic. He underwent rehabilitation and by spring 2012 he was teaching immunology at BU. It was his last course. “He came back with the same sort of wry sense of humor and quick wit, like okay, this is just the new normal now,” Tolan says.

Hausman, who also was the biology department’s director of graduate studies, died on April 25, 2015. He was 68.

“He was an inspiration to us all,” says Tolan. “We really miss his commitment. We really miss him.”

Hausman earned a dual BA-MA in biology at Case Western Reserve University and a PhD in biological science at Northwestern University. In 1978, after completing postdoctoral research at the University of Chicago, he joined BU’s biology department as an assistant professor.

He was the cornerstone of the undergraduate cell and molecular biology curricula, teaching the second-semester cell biology lecture class, as well as an honors cell biology course and a graduate seminar on biochemical and molecular aspects of development. Hausman coauthored the textbook *The Cell: A Molecular Approach* with Geoffrey Cooper, a CAS professor of biology and associate dean of the natural sciences faculty.

In 1987, Hausman became the department’s director of graduate studies, a position that suited him, Tolan says. “It’s not an easy job, but Rob was great at what it entailed, dealing with faculty members and their students. He knew when to intervene and when not to intervene. He was an artist at it.”