



News *Release*

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Stephen I. Katz, M.D., Ph.D. Receives Dermatology Foundation Lifetime Career Educator Award

At its recent annual meeting of membership in Denver, the Dermatology Foundation recognized the tremendous contribution Stephen I. Katz, M.D., Ph.D., has made to the specialty of dermatology by honoring him with the Lifetime Career Educator award. The award honors Dr. Katz's lifelong history of dedicated service as a mentor, role model and inspirational teacher to many generations of residents and fellows.

Immunodermatologist Dr. Stephen I. Katz, after joining the fledgling Dermatology Branch of the National Cancer Institute in 1974, quickly became and has remained an important teacher and mentor in the specialty. He was chief of the Dermatology Branch from 1977 to 2001 and has been director of NIAMS (National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases) since 1995, and from the very start the centerpiece of this highly accomplished scientist's career has been his immunodermatology lab and the fertile, hands-on mentoring environment he created there. In addition to Dr. Katz's fundamental contributions to the immunobiology of the skin over the years, his lab functions as a vital training center for students

and fellows who have become outstanding physician-scientists and leaders in investigative dermatology across the U.S. and abroad. His fundamental contributions to the immunobiology of the skin included the characterization of Langerhans cells and dendritic cells, and epidermally expressed cytokines.

“It is very fitting that Steve Katz be recognized by the DF this year with the Lifetime Career Educator Award,” says a former mentee and long-time dermatology department chair. “His curiosity, enthusiasm, and lifelong commitment to science and scholarly activities have had a profound and durable impact on his trainees and the specialty in this country and others. His candle has lit many fires.”

Dr. Katz learned the importance of good mentors in his own early experiences. His first, and still most important, mentor was his older brother, Rockville, MD, dermatologist Robert Katz. “Bob helped open my eyes to the world, to medical school, to dermatology, and to a research-oriented residency program. This last choice transformed me,” Dr. Katz says. Among his valued mentors, Dr. Katz also notes British immunologist Dr. John Turk with whom he did a post-residency research fellowship. This experience ignited his passion for research, and he returned to the U.S. and joined the NIH in 1974 as a Senior Investigator in the newly formed Dermatology Branch.

Crucial to Dr. Katz’s ability to accept this fellowship were the combined support of the GI Bill and a Research Fellowship awarded by the Dermatology Foundation in 1971, the fifth year of DF awards. “So if you call me a success,” Dr. Katz wryly notes, “the Dermatology Foundation had something to do with it.”

Ironically, when Dr. Katz joined the Dermatology Branch it was for “a three- to four-year adventure. The NIH seemed like a candy store where one could choose from seemingly myriad possible research pursuits with extraordinary potential for collaboration.” He had no idea that he would be there 40 years later, as enthusiastic as ever, nor that the Dermatology Branch would rapidly become a magnet for residents and medical students who would—alongside their mentor—become movers and shakers in the specialty’s progress.

Another of his early mentees—who went on to transform a dermatology department as chair, and then a medical school as its dean—points out that “Steve has inspired and educated a generation of academic leaders in dermatology in the U.S. and internationally. He is an outstanding role model and friend in all ways who has had an enormous influence on dermatology world-wide.”

Dr. Katz has received an exceptional number of national and international honors and awards. He is particularly proud of his honorary memberships in both American and foreign dermatology organizations, and of the Presidential Executive Meritorious Rank Award from President Clinton. He is also thrilled with the Japanese government’s bestowal of the Order of the Rising Sun in 2011 for his “great contribution to the education of Japanese dermatologists.”

Dr. Katz acknowledges that the essence of his satisfaction with his career in dermatology has been “in teaching, and in developing a core of scientists who went on to develop their own independent leadership positions in the U.S. and around the world. That is tremendously satisfying and gives me great joy.”

The Dermatology Foundation was established in 1964 and is the leading private funding source for skin disease research. It provides funding that helps develop and retain tomorrow’s teachers and researchers in dermatology, enabling advancements in patient care.

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