

# News Release

1560 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201-4806  
Voice: (847) 328-2256 Fax: (847) 328-0509  
[dfgen@dermatologyfoundation.org](mailto:dfgen@dermatologyfoundation.org)  
[dermatologyfoundation.org](http://dermatologyfoundation.org)

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**For More Information Contact:**  
Chris Boris  
Deputy Executive Director

**Maria L. Chanco Turner, M.D.**

## **Receives Dermatology Foundation Lifetime Career Educator Award**

At its recent annual meeting of membership in Washington, DC, the Dermatology Foundation recognized the tremendous contributions that Maria L. Chanco Turner, M.D. has made to dermatology by honoring her with the Lifetime Career Educator Award. The award honors Dr. Turner's exceptional career and the inspiration she has provided for generations of dermatologists through her dedication to the continued education of physicians at all stages of their careers.

“Dr. Maria Chanco Turner brings a remarkably broad vision to the concept of education,” a colleague points out. “For decades, she has taken a personal interest in the clinical education and professional success of fledgling dermatologists during their tours of duty at the NIH and beyond. She gradually developed a national following of Turner-educated devotees who now represent a ‘Who’s Who in Academic Dermatology’.”

Dr. Turner's training to be an effective teacher and mentor began in the Phillipines. Her mother was a physician who provided health care to the indigent, and her father specialized in tropical diseases. Their strong focus on academics, research, and charitable involvement became her values as well. After completing her medical education and partial residency in internal medicine in Manila, Dr. Turner was accepted into Yale's dermatology residency program. “The specialty fascinated me because you can see the disease right in front of you.”

Dr. Turner moved to Washington, DC, right after her residency and taught in Howard University's dermatology department for two years. In 1966, while caring for her young children, she became a part-time staff dermatologist at an HMO—the only part-time position she could find at a time when few women were in dermatology. George Washington University Medical

School was right across the street, and soon Dr. Turner began to mentor residents and medical students. With her children in high school, she accepted a full-time faculty position there. A decade later, former mentor Dr. Steven Katz at the NIH offered her the position of Chief of the Dermatology Branch's Consultation Service.

Dr. Turner's responsibilities at the NIH included the education and supervision of clinical fellows and arranging the biweekly grand rounds that became a hugely popular resource for dialogue and learning. She was also very involved in clinical trials and in multidisciplinary research studies. She greatly enjoyed the interdisciplinary clinical collaboration: "I consulted on patients with infectious diseases, cancers, genetic syndromes, and the with fellows taking care of them—and I was really teaching by preceptorship, not lecturing." A former NIH dermatology fellow credits Dr. Turner with "giving me my clinical skills. She taught me to look at things with a completely different eye than any other attending ever had." Dr. Turner's impact and reputation as an exceptional educator spread quickly. She became a visiting professor at dermatology training programs across the country, and a mentor to third-year dermatology residents through a diverse number of specialty organizations. Dr. Turner has been Senior Clinician Emerita at the NIH since 2009, and continues to regard her former fellows as family. She also continues to volunteer at the Spanish Catholic Center's clinic, dispensing care for indigents in the Washington, DC area.

In a colleague's words, "Maria represents the very best with respect to education in our field." Dr. Turner shares that she has built her career on a simple philosophy. "It is not just about the specialty of dermatology," she explains. "It's also about how you live your life and how you relate to others. All of that is part of the equation."

*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, and enable advancements in patient care. For more information visit [dermatologyfoundation.org](http://dermatologyfoundation.org) or [visit us on Facebook](#).*

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