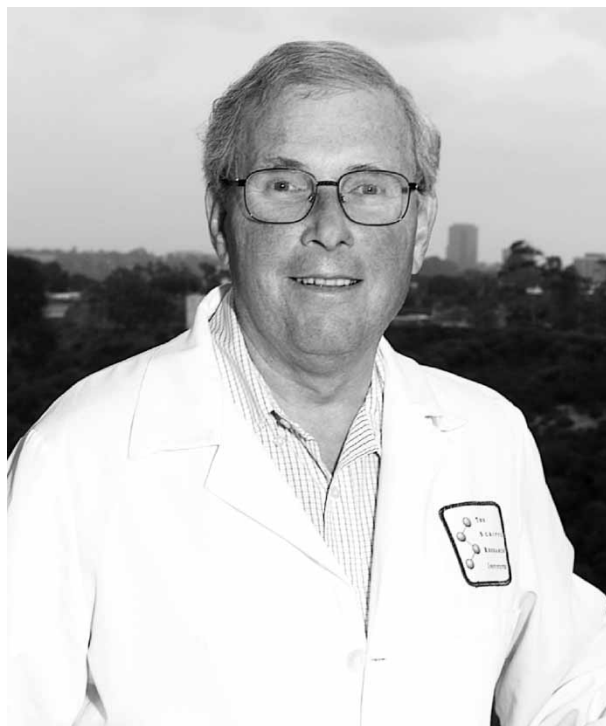


Obituary

In Memoriam Bernard M. Babior



Bernard M. Babior, M.D., Ph.D., a pioneer in free radical biology, died in San Diego, California on June 29, 2004, after a long battle with prostate cancer. He was a Professor and Head of the Division of Biochemistry at The Scripps Research Institute and a Staff Physician at the Scripps Clinic, both in La Jolla, California.

Dr Babior was born in Los Angeles on November 10, 1935. He received his M.D. degree at the University of California at San Francisco in 1959. After interning at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, he joined the laboratory of Nobel laureate-to-be Konrad Bloch at Harvard University and was awarded a Ph.D. degree in 1965. He received further training at The National Institutes of Health, then served on the faculty of Harvard University and at

Tufts University before moving to The Scripps Research Institute in 1986.

Dr Babior, or “Bernie” as he was known to hundreds of us in the free radical field, was perhaps best known for his landmark discovery in 1973 that activated human white blood cells produce the superoxide radical for bactericidal purposes.^[1] This observation was quickly followed by a paper showing that individuals with the genetic defect causing chronic granulomatous disease are unable to make the radical, and unable to fight off microbial infection.^[2] This provided the first real link between free radicals and disease processes such as infection and inflammation, and it was a career-changing event for Bernie. Fortunately for all of us, he continued down that new

path for more than thirty years, giving us more than 250 such contributions, all elegantly conceived and clearly communicated. Indeed, Bernie redirected the careers of many of us.

One of my earliest recollections of Bernie, from nearly 30 years ago, was amidst huffing and puffing as we hiked up for a conference picnic to an alpine meadow, along with the cows being taken up for the lush summer pasture. As vivid as the memories of the idyllic surroundings remain, it was equally clear as we talked that this new colleague was not only going to move free radical biology in new directions, but was also a kind, open, funny, and outgoing friend.

Bernie received numerous honors recognizing his contributions to biochemistry and medicine. He was elected to membership of the American Society for Clinical Investigation, Association of American Physicians, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the prestigious National Academy of Sciences. He served on the editorial boards of leading professional journals, including the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, *Blood*, *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, and the *American Journal*

of Hematology. From their inception, he participated actively in the International Society for Free Radical Research (ISFRR), the Oxygen Society (now the Society for Free Radical Biology and Medicine), and the Oxygen Club of California, providing sage advice and counsel. Only months before his death, Bernie was honored at the ISFRR meeting in Buenos Aires with the Trevor Slater Award.

Bernie is survived by his wife Shirley and their two children, Jill and Gregory. Our condolences go to his family and to all who were close to him. He will be missed.

Joe M. McCord

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- Curnutte, J.T., Whitten, D.M. and Babior, B.M. (1974) "Defective superoxide production by granulocytes from patients with chronic granulomatous disease", *N. Engl. J. Med.* **290**, 593-597.