



## **ROBERT MELLINS, MD, REMEMBERED**

Robert Mellins, MD

ATS Past President Robert Mellins, MD, professor emeritus of pediatrics and special lecturer in the Columbia University Medical Center Pediatric Pulmonary Division, died on Dec. 12, 2012. He was 84.

Dr. Mellins' term as ATS president in 1982–83 marked the first and only time a pediatrician held this position. In 2011, he was honored with the ATS Pediatric Assembly's Founder Award.

In addition to his longtime involvement with the Society, Dr. Mellins was a past president of the Fleischner Society and a vice president of the American Lung Association. His many achievements have been recognized by a number of organizations. He's been awarded the ALA Will Ross Medal, the ATS Distinguished Achievement Award, the AAP-ACCP E. L. Kendig Award, and the Columbia University P&S Distinguished Alumnus Award.

"To say that Bob was a giant in the field of pulmonary medicine is to do an injustice to the enormity of his contributions to the field, and to the person that he was," said Meyer Kattan, MD, director of the Pediatric Pulmonary Division at Columbia University Medical Center. "He was one of the founders of the entire field of pediatric pulmonology, but beyond that he was a great mentor, teacher, guide, supporter, and friend to generations of physicians at Columbia and beyond.

"He was a great advocate for those with lung disease, and thousands upon thousands of patients are the better for his efforts. He always tried to help everyone that he could, and he was always gracious, warm and generous to friends, colleagues, students and patients. His loss will be felt greatly."

Dr. Mellins obtained his medical degree from Johns Hopkins University and then trained extensively in pediatrics, cardiology, and cardio-respiratory medicine at Columbia University, where he subsequently became the first director of the Pediatric Pulmonary Division.

Recognizing the importance of multidisciplinary training, Dr. Mellins' many trainees came from the disciplines of allergy, anesthesiology, cardiology, engineering, health education, internal medicine, neonatology, nutrition, psychology, and pediatric pulmonology.

"Dr. Mellins was an outstanding physician and scientist and made important and fundamental contributions to pulmonary medicine throughout his entire career," says Gerard Turino, MD, founding director of the James P. Mara Center for Lung Disease at St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals and past president of the ATS.

Along with his distinguished clinical career, Dr. Mellins was active in private foundations devoted to the betterment of the Society. He was the president of the L.A. Jones Foundation, an organization dedicated to responsible leadership in adolescent boys and girls, and chaired the Strategic Planning Committee for the Arnold F. Gold Foundation, which is dedicated to humanism in medicine.

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### ROBERT B. MELLINS

MELLINS--Robert B., MD, 84, on December 12, 2012 in New York City. Born in Brooklyn, he received a BA degree from Columbia University and a MD degree from Johns Hopkins University, and subsequently returned to Columbia to be trained in pediatrics, cardiology and pulmonology. He was a compassionate physician, a devoted mentor and an internationally recognized authority in the field of childhood asthma. Until months before his death, he provided outstanding care to infants and children with lung diseases. He established the Pediatric Pulmonary Division at Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons and served as president of the American Thoracic Society, the Fleischner Society, and the L.A. Johns Foundation, as well as vice-president of the American Lung Association. He was Professor Emeritus at Columbia University and the recipient of the Physicians and Surgeons Distinguished Service Award. His pioneering research and untiring focus on the training and mentoring of physicians and other health-care professionals improved the lives of children around the world. Additionally, Bob, as he was widely known, was an accomplished musician, skier, figure skater, and gardener, as well as an avid reader, and an intellectual with deep and varied interests. Devoted and beloved husband of Sue, the proud father of Claude Ann and David Rustin, father-in-law of Michael Conard, and grandfather of Nicolas, Will, and Ryan Conard, he brought joy to an extended family and numerous close friends. He will be deeply missed by them, by his colleagues, students, patients, and all who benefited from his wisdom, warmth, and generous spirit. Services will be held at the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, 30 West 68th Street, at 11:45am on Sunday, December 16, 2012. Contributions can be made to the two organizations dearest to his heart: the Louis August Jonas Foundation in support of Camp Rising Sun and the Arnold P. Gold Foundation in support of Humanism in Medicine.

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### ROBERT MELLINS

MELLINS--Robert, MD. The faculty and staff of the Pediatric Pulmonary Division at Columbia University Medical Center mourn the loss of Robert Mellins, an advocate for children's health who was a leader in establishing Pediatric Pulmonology as a sub-specialty of Pediatrics. He was a compassionate physician who practiced the art and science of medicine. He served in leadership roles in many scientific and charitable organizations including past-president of the American Thoracic Society and board member of the Arnold P. Gold Foundation for Humanism in Medicine. He was a mentor and teacher to generations of physicians at Columbia and around the world and took great pride in the accomplishments of his trainees. His energy and thoughtfulness inspired all of us. We extend our sincere condolences to his wife, Sue, his children, Claude and David and his grandchildren. Meyer Kattan MD Director Pediatric Pulmonary Division Columbia University Medical Center

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### ROBERT MELLINS

MELLINS--Robert. NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital and Columbia University Medical Center mourn the passing of Dr. Robert Mellins. Professor emeritus of pediatrics, Dr. Mellins was a renowned physician, teacher, researcher, and advocate who served our institutions with distinction for four decades. As the inaugural director of the pediatric pulmonary division at Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Babies and Children's Hospital at Columbia - Presbyterian (now known as Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital), Dr. Mellins not only established pediatric pulmonology at NewYork-Presbyterian/ Columbia, but helped spearhead its development as a medical subspecialty. His passion and clinical skills have improved the lives of generations of children with lung diseases, and he has left an indelible mark on our hospital and medical school. Dr. Mellins will be fondly remembered. We extend our deepest condolences to his entire family. Steven J. Corwin, MD, CEO, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Lee Goldman, MD, Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Sciences and Dean of the Faculties of Health Sciences and Medicine, Columbia University Medical Center Lawrence Stanberry, MD, PhD, the Reuben S. Carpentier Professor of Pediatrics and Pediatrician-in-Chief, NewYork-Presbyterian/ Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital

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### ROBERT MELLINS

MELLINS--Robert, MD. The faculty and staff of the Department of Pediatrics at Columbia University Medical Center mourn the loss of our dear friend and colleague, Dr. Robert Mellins. Dr. Mellins started his affiliation with the Columbia University Medical Center as a resident in 1955. As an esteemed member of the pediatrics faculty since 1957, Dr. Mellins was the first director of the Pediatric Pulmonary Division of the Babies Hospital. He was regarded as one of the founding fathers of the field of Pediatric Pulmonology. His important contributions led to insights into the pathophysiology of asthma and chronic lung disease and to development and critical evaluation of asthma self-management programs. He served on local, national and international committees to raise the standard of asthma care. Dr. Mellins has been honored with numerous prestigious awards including the Columbia University Medical Center Distinguished Service Award, the Edwin L. Kendig, Jr., Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Medical Education Award for Lay Education from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Will Ross Medal from the American Thoracic Society, and the Founder's Award of the American Thoracic Society Pediatric Assembly, all clearly demonstrating his contribution to the advancement of the study of children and their diseases, leadership in the prevention and promotion of childhood health, and his exemplary record in pediatric education and research. Our deepest condolences go out to his wife, Sue, his children, Claude and David, and his family and friends. Lawrence R. Stanberry, MD, PhD Reuben S. Carpentier Professor and Chairman, Department of Pediatrics Columbia University Medical Center

## Dr. Heather Zar Tribute to Dr. Mellins

It's a great privilege to have been asked to say a few words in honour of Dr Mellins this evening. I first met Bob in 1991 when I joined the Pediatric Pulmonology Division at Columbia as a fellow at Babies and Childrens Hospital of New York where I spent 3 years as a fellow, after which I returned to South Africa. This was the beginning of a wonderful relationship with Dr Mellins, firstly as a teacher and mentor and then as a friend and colleague.

My first memory of Bob is from my first day of fellowship when he invited me to join him in his clinic seeing his patients. I remember being struck by his amazing empathy, gentleness and skill – a great example for anyone thinking of a career in Pediatric Pulmonology. As a fellow I came to recognise his superb clinical skills and remarkable ability with parents and children. And of course, he was an inspiring teacher.

But Bob taught me much more than clinical skills and empathy. He taught me a way of approaching academic practice and of critical thinking that I could never have imagined. Entering the fellowship program, I had little knowledge of research, particularly laboratory based work or clinical science. When Bob insisted that I spend time in Alice Prince's and Lisa Saimans lab growing cells and looking at Pseudomonas adherence I was at first horrified – and even thought of quitting. But he was of course right – this turned out to be a wonderful opportunity which enabled me to better understand aspects of basic science, translational research and the importance of integration with clinical sciences. This has had a profound impact on my own practice and thinking.

Now, as a program director and mentor I have renewed awe for the ways in which Bob Mellins sought to develop each particular fellow and the amount of work he put into this. Always careful to consider each fellow's strength and needs, he spent hours thinking about what would be best for each person and lining up potential mentors and projects. He told me that the best fellows kept him the busiest – looking for equipment, support and seeing to their needs. In return, he was uncompromising, demanding the best from each fellow in his gentle way.

As we well know, Bob has been a driving force in the development and advancement of Pediatric Pulmonology. He has made many, wide contributions through clinical leadership, training and teaching, research and advocacy. But his influence has been much larger than his direct contributions and is seen in the many people and structures he has created or influenced. Perhaps his most remarkable quality is his ability to develop and nurture people and his investment in this development of people. To me personally, he continues to be an ongoing, wise and generous mentor. He once told me that he measures himself not by his own success or publications or recognition he has received, but by the people he has mentored and their achievements. His legacy and influence continue through the people he has trained or mentored, from many parts of the world, many of whom are here tonight.

Beyond all his talent, skill and ability, is a man of great integrity and humanity. Robert Mellins for me is a truly outstanding individual who has made an enormous and unique contribution to advancing child lung health globally. It has been a privilege to know and learn from him.