

Molecular Medicine Commemorates the Career and Science of Anthony Cerami

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This special issue of *Molecular Medicine* showcases the fields of science that were directly influenced by the scientific contributions of Anthony Cerami, founding editor of *Molecular Medicine*. This work spans five decades, and culminated in the discovery, invention and development of diagnostics and therapeutics used daily by millions. The authors are leaders in the fields of parasitology, hematology, immunology, metabolism, therapeutics and molecular medicine. Their reviews were commissioned in order to capture their personal stories of scientific discovery that were influenced by Dr. Cerami.

Students in molecular medicine and investigators pursuing basic science in the hopes of improving human health will find inspiration in these accounts. Several themes emerge from the collective approaches used by these brilliant investigators to solve the hard problems of human disease pathogenesis. First, they followed twisting paths that often

led to unexpected destinations. Showcased here is discovery science at its best: the process of identifying the new, the unknown and the unexpected. This approach to scientific discovery is art and science, because it requires revealing the therapeutic and physiological potential from data that can at times appear wholly impractical.

The second theme is persistence. Without persistence, discovery science is doomed to fail. Persistence in pursuit of scientific results cannot be replaced by any technology. It resides in the heart and mind of the investigator, bringing focus to the task at hand. This type of persistence is not measured in minutes or hours, but days, weeks and decades.

Third, these authors share a passion and drive to alleviate suffering caused by human disease. Their approach to basic molecular medicine utilizes chemistry, molecular biology, signal transduction and cell biology. While it is perfectly

reasonable to pursue the systematic study of the natural world by a reductionist approach within these fields, these investigators share Dr. Cerami's personal motive to move beyond observations of the natural world in order to perform experiments that will produce new diagnostics and therapeutics.

It is especially timely to read these contributions in our present era of fiscal constraint and declining support for the sciences in the United States and worldwide. Investments in scientific discovery provide the basic intellectual infrastructure that supports the expansion of society and improves health and longevity. The work summarized here spanned decades of relative wealth—and relative austerity—in scientific support. Success came despite the fiscal vagaries of scientific funding. It should be noted that today, those of us inhabiting the world are the beneficiaries.

Perhaps there could be no more optimistic theme than one that emerges from discovery, persistence and passion focused on alleviating human suffering. It is a privilege to publish these contributions to the field of molecular medicine, to celebrate Dr. Cerami's influence in science and medicine, and to consider that the impact of this combined work is benefiting patients today. More will benefit tomorrow, and future generations of molecular medicine researchers can learn from this approach.

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