



Robert J. Levine

December 29, 1934 - February 25, 2021

Robert John Levine, M.D., passed away peacefully at the age of 86 on February 25, 2021 at Whitney Center in Hamden CT where he lived with his wife of 33 years, Jeralea Hesse. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his sister, Caroline Levine; his children, John G. Levine (Amy) and Elizabeth L. Braun; his granddaughter, Mikayla K. Braun; his step-children, Stephen B. Hesse, Jr. (Lorena); and Katherine F. Hesse; his step-grandchildren, Alexandra R. Cerrone, Olivia A. Hesse, and Samuel R. Hesse. His parents, Benjamin B. Levine, M.D. and Ruth S. Levine and his brother, Michael Levine, predeceased him. Dr. Levine, Professor Emeritus of Medicine was a giant in the field of pharmacology and medical research ethics. The first edition of his book “Ethics and the Regulation of Clinical Research” was published in 1981 and the second in 1986 and has had global influence. In addition, he wrote over 300 articles, and contributed chapters to books, reports and essays. Bob’s journal and encyclopedic editorial work has shaped the fields of medicine, pharmacology, and clinical research ethics. He founded the editorship of “IRB: a Review of Human Subjects Research” and served Yale’s IRB committee for 21 years. He contributed to many publications including the “Encyclopedia of Bioethics;” the “Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics;” the “Journal of Empirical Research on Human Subjects;” to mention a few. During the course of his service and leadership in professional and governmental organizations and agencies, at state, national and international levels he was brought into personal contact with other professional and governmental

leaders in the American College of Physicians, the American Federation for Clinical Research, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare , NIH and NIMH, in the American Foundation for AIDS Research , CDC and in the World Health Organization. He was on more than 20 different state and safety monitoring boards. Bob first came to Yale in 1962 from George Washington University Medical School as Clinical Instructor in Medicine and Pharmacology. He quickly became a full professor and continued to teach at Yale until retirement in 2016. In the early 70's the primary focus of his teaching and research shifted to research ethics. This work included co-teaching with Margaret Farley R.S.M. An interdisciplinary course in medical ethics for over 12 years. For 30 years Bob chaired the Human Investigation Committee and the Yale-New Haven Medical Center. In 1985 he was a founding member of the hospital's Bioethics Committee and served on this committee for many years. In addition his leadership of the Law, Policy and Ethics Core of CIRA (Yale's Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS is legendary. He and Margaret Farley R.S.M. co-founded and co-directed the Yale Interdisciplinary Bioethics Center. Bob took seriously the education and mentoring of younger scholars and practitioners. Through the years he provided guidance to approximately 30 seniors in developing their thesis. Many of these students became not only colleagues but friends. The professional life of Bob Levine has been celebrated with the many prestigious awards and honors. For example he was given an Outstanding Achievement Medal from the US Department of Health and Human Services for his role in the groundbreaking Belmont Report. He received a Lifetime Achievement award for Excellence from the Public Responsibility in Medicine Research Organization (PRIM&R). His alma mater, George Washington University, gave Bob its Distinguished Scholar Award in 2008. In 2009 the Academy of Pharmaceutical Physicians and Investigators gave him Special Recognition for Outstanding Contributions in Research. Bob embraced his private life with the same gusto as his professional life. His work took him and Jerry to exotic regions of the world, where he absorbed both cultures and histories. They often returned with

unusual gifts for the family. (There is still and enormous didgeridoo from Australia in his office that was too hard to wrap and send.) Family life was always interesting. His son , John, recalls climbing the Columbian ice fields with his Dad and getting caught in a blinding blizzard. His daughter, Liz, remembers a conversation when she was 12 involving the question, “if you find nail clippings on a table top, is it ethical to use them for research?” Bob was an avid squash player, sometimes beaming after beating a much younger medical student. Later he and Jerry became certified scuba divers and enjoyed exploring the colorful creatures in deep waters. Whenever he was near a new body of water, he would take a swim, once swimming in the Indian Ocean with the sharks (nets included.) Bob could play a mean harmonica and often woke up singing a Hank Williams’ song, or one from Kristofferson (whom he once met at an airport,) or Sinatra or Ella. He was a dedicated Yankee baseball and Duke basketball fan. His sense of humor ranged from the sly and wry to the bawdy. Bob was an intriguing and gracious conversationalist, often sharing thoughtful, rich reflections of his own experiences His explorations with friends of ethical decision making revealed his intellectual rigor and respect for all people. He attended closely to the stories of others, intuitively grasping the meaning to the story teller. He was a loving grandfather, father and husband and will be deeply missed by those whose lives he touched. Contributions may be made in his honor to Guiding Eyes for the Blind (Yorktown Heights NY), Saybrook College, Yale University (New Haven CT) and Whitney Center Staff Development Fund (Hamden CT) Sisk Brothers Funeral Home 3105 Whitney Ave. Hamden in care of arrangements. To leave an online condolence please visit www.siskbrothers.com

Tribute Wall

AS

“*Dr. Levine was a kind and enthusiastic mentor to me early in my career. He always explained everything so thoroughly and patiently. His dedication to continuing to interrogate all dimensions of medical research ethics was inspiring. Every fall, I talk to my students about his work in our Research Methods class and we watch a short video where he describes the history of research ethics policies. My deepest condolences to his family and friends during this difficult time. I will remember his powerful gift for logical and balanced thinking, that always centered the patient, and his sharp personal style - ring, watch, ironed and pressed - a class act!*

Amy Smoyer

Amy Smoyer - March 17, 2021 at 10:39 PM

HM

“*Bob was a thoughtful, caring, and intelligent force in so many lives, and will remain positively influential for generations to come. Jim and I have fond memories of travels in the U.S. and to foreign countries made even more interesting and enjoyable by Bob's presence. May his memory be a blessing to all.*

Helen and Jim McGough

Helen McGough - March 17, 2021 at 12:49 PM

AM

“ Jerry,
Oh my. Bob was truly one of the really good guys. It's been a while since we last sat across from each other at the poker table...and since we last got together at the Whitney Center...and it's been a while since my family and I moved to Los Angeles...but my wonderful memories of Bob are as vivid as ever. Bob was ever decent, caring, thoughtful and ready with a warm smile.

Please know, you have my heartfelt condolences. May Bob's memory always be a blessing.

Allan Myer

allan myer - March 16, 2021 at 04:17 PM

DZ

“ He welcomed me into the work of the HIC. He was very supportive and due to his encouragement, I stayed on the committee for many years. He had so much to teach us. These were important and common sense things, often overlooked in our day-to-day work. His book is a treasure.

Dan Zelterman

Daniel Zelterman - March 16, 2021 at 10:41 AM

EK

“ I was saddened to learn of Bob Levine's passing. Bob's dedication to ethics in medical and public health research and practice are the stuff of legend. We interacted frequently and regularly in the early days of New Haven's HIV/AIDS epidemic and via the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS, especially the Law, Policy and Ethics core. I have vivid memories of Bob in many a meeting or just over coffee carefully analyzing the ethical aspects of all things HIV/AIDS related. He was a caring, careful, and good person. May his memory be a blessing to his family and friends. -Ed Kaplan

Ed Kaplan - March 16, 2021 at 10:32 AM

CP

“ Dear Jerry and Levine Family Members,
I had so enjoyed working with Bob on the formation of Yale's Bioethics Center and, as director of Yale's Summer Institute for Bioethics, enjoyed having him teach and mentor our students. Sad for all of us to lose his creativity, passion for learning, and mentoring abilities. He will be sorely missed by not only his own family but those at Yale who enjoyed knowing him and working along side of him. Carol Pollard

Carol Pollard - March 07, 2021 at 08:28 PM

SM

“ I served on the YNHH Human Investigations Committee with Bob, and spent the entire time learning at his feet. His sense of the rights of patients, and the legitimate needs of the scientific community was unique and rigorous. And it was such a pleasure to be with him. His warmth, humor, and good common sense enriched every meeting. I mourned when my time on the committee ended. And mourn at the news of his death. What a mark he left...
Steve Wolfson

steven wolfson, md - March 07, 2021 at 01:37 PM

GA

“ Dear Jeralea,

I was so sorry to read about Bob's passing this morning. I wanted to express my sincere sympathy to you and your family. I so enjoyed having the privilege of being Bob's dentist for so many years. He was always such a pleasure to see and provide his care. The only times we ever has a issue was when his Blue Devils beat my Huskies. May you cherish your memories of your lives together.

Sincerely,

Jerry Alexander

Gerald Alexander - March 07, 2021 at 10:56 AM