

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
DAVID ALLENBERG KATZENSTEIN
1952-2021

David Katzenstein, Professor Emeritus of Medicine in Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine, died of COVID-19 in Harare, Zimbabwe on January 25, 2021. He was 69 years old.

David was born in Hartford, CT in a politically and intellectually-engaged family; his father was a physicist and his mother a psychologist. His family moved to Southern California when he was a child and he completed his undergraduate, medical school, residency and fellowship training at UCSD.

David began his academic career conducting CMV research at UC Davis but quickly pivoted to join the pioneers conducting research on a new disease--HIV -- in the early 1980's. He then moved to the University of Minnesota but, having spent most of his life in sunny California, enthusiastically seized the opportunity to flee the cold to work for two years in Zimbabwe in 1985. After his return to the U.S., he briefly worked on antivirals at the FDA before joining the faculty at Stanford in 1989 where he remained until his retirement in 2016.

David led pioneering clinical and translational research on HIV. The studies he shepherded with his colleagues in Stanford's AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG) resulted in the approval of several life-saving antiretroviral medications, helping to move HIV from a death sentence to an infection with near normal life-expectancy. David dedicated a significant portion of his academic endeavors to studying HIV drug resistance, leading one of the Virology Specialty Laboratories for the ACTG for many years. Recognizing the disparate impact of HIV around the world, David was also a trailblazer in Global HIV Research, in the fields of perinatal HIV transmission prevention, and in optimizing antiretroviral treatment and laboratory monitoring in resource limited settings. David's passionate advocacy for access to antiretroviral treatments and virologic testing in Sub-Saharan Africa, helped to make HIV a treatable disease worldwide. Sometimes his efforts led to run-ins with customs to get frozen items released, "laboratory in a suitcase", he used to call it, or with the NIH or other funding agencies when he felt they were not aggressive enough in their approach to saving lives. It took creativity, commitment and, at times, stubbornness to accomplish his work, but David embraced it all. Following his retirement from Stanford University in 2016, David became the director of the Biomedical Research Training Institute in Zimbabwe where he led the molecular diagnostics laboratory to support laboratory monitoring of community-based HIV treatment programs in Zimbabwe.

Generous with his time, effort and ideas, David was a cherished mentor for many young and mid-career physicians and scientists, now scattered throughout different academic institutions and agencies in the U.S. and around the world. With his encyclopedic

knowledge, penetrating intellect, and drive towards social justice, David helped level the playing field for those in resource-limited setting. He exemplified academic excellence and humanitarianism, inspiring those around him to aspire to high achievement, all with the goal of contributing to the common good. He worked tirelessly and with great joy, giving of himself without reserve. His energy and enthusiasm were legend.

A free-spirited child of the 60's, David pursued his academic interests while simultaneously exploring the wonders of the world, always seeking adventure and new experiences. From the coasts of California, Mexico, and Cape Town; the temples and ruins in Cambodia; the veld and safari of the African continent; castles and palaces; Cuba and Iran – nothing was off limits. He enjoyed culinary adventures – buying chantarelle mushrooms from the roadside in Zimbabwe, eating his hot pepper daily (anything spicy was good); making homemade cornbread in his well-seasoned skillet; or teaching all the proper way to cook artichokes. He was also an avid collector of Zimbabwean art and a devoted sponsor of many Zimbabwean artists. He loved the tranquility of his home in San Gregorio, where he could traipse in his own wilderness with friends, throw parties and even let 8 year olds drive his tractor. When a 100-year flood decimated his property in 1997, he responded with typical bonhomie, inviting his many friends to dance around a mountainous bonfire built from the debris. The San Gregorio fire department was not amused.

David survived several previous run-ins with death: first a bout with the deadly virus, H1N1 in 2008 and then a 90-foot fall into a canyon in Big Sur. There, he saved his own life by using his belt as a tourniquet around a shattered leg as he waited long hours to be evacuated. The medical adventures that followed included at least 17 surgeries on his “two-million-dollar leg” as he used to call it. Ironically, this world-renowned virologist ultimately lost his life to a virus, COVID-19 in Harare, after a brief illness, his death occurring just hours before his friend and colleague, the renowned Zimbabwean HIV researcher, Dr. James Hakim, similarly succumbed.

David died in the place that he loved, taken care of by physicians whom he mentored, of a disease he might have helped to control had he survived. His wife, the artist Sharon Mayes, preceded him in death in 2007. He is survived by his three siblings, Rob Katzenstein, Ruth Souza and Amy Harrington, by his step-daughter, Melissa Sanders-Self and her sons, Dylan and Luke.

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