

Edwin L. Bierman, MD (1930–1995)

Edwin L. Bierman, MD, was a truly outstanding clinician and researcher. He contributed significantly to the field of lipidology, namely in physiologic and nutritional regulation of lipoprotein metabolism. He also focused on lipid and lipoprotein disorders in obesity and diabetes, particularly with respect to atherosclerosis.

His innovative approach in using human cultured cells to study atherosclerosis made him a well-known expert in his field. His research also led to a finding that linked premature heart attacks to genes that abnormally increase levels of serum fat and cholesterol. As a leader in vascular biology, he founded the highly regarded journal *Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology*. His most cited article was “Hyperlipidemia in Coronary Heart Disease. II. Genetic Analysis of Lipid Levels in 176 Families and Delineation of a New Inherited Disorder, Combined Hyperlipidemia,” co-authored with William R. Hazzard, MD, and published in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*. In another seminal piece, he advocated a then-unconventional diet for diabetes that cut down on fat and cholesterol in favor of complex carbohydrates.

Dr. Bierman graduated from Weill Cornell Medical College in 1955 and completed his residency at New York Hospital. He was assistant professor at the Rockefeller Institute of Government from 1960 to 1962, and he became assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Washington in 1962. There, he was promoted to professor in 1968 and remained that during the rest of his career. He was the first director of the University of Washington’s Northwest Lipid Research Clinic, and the Edwin L. Bierman Professorship of Medicine was established in his honor.

Dr. Bierman was the chair of the Council on Arteriosclerosis of the American Heart Association for many years, co-discovered broad beta disease, and co-chaired the Committee on Design and Definition of the Lipid Research Clinics Coronary Primary Prevention Trials, where we had many discussions on whether to include the Fredrickson classification of lipid disorders. He had many protégés, most notably, John Brunzell, MD.

In addition to his academic and scientific stature, he was a wonderful physician as he showed kindness when he treated my daughter, Gillian, after an episode of diabetic ketoacidosis in Seattle.

Dr. Bierman was born Sept. 17, 1930, in Far Rockaway, N.Y., and passed away July 5, 1995, after battling nerve sheath sarcoma. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn, his children, Ellen and David, and his grandchildren, Danielle, Aaron, and Zachary.