

## **John W. Gofman, MD, PhD (1918–2007)**

John W. Gofman, MD, PhD, was a medical doctor, nuclear chemist, Manhattan Project scientist, co-discoverer of isotopes of uranium and protactinium, and the first to separate plutonium in usable quantities. He fought until the end for policies to disperse plutonium and other radioactivity from the nuclear power/weapons fuel chain into the environment and out of control. He repeatedly stood up to government pressure to suppress the truth about radiation health dangers and set an example for scientific integrity.

Dr. Gofman earned his medical degree from the University of California, San Francisco in 1946. After that, he and his collaborators investigated the body's lipoproteins, which contain both proteins and fats, and their circulation within the bloodstream. The researchers described low-density and high-density lipoproteins and their roles in metabolic disorders and coronary disease. This work continued throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Dr. Gofman did groundbreaking research in cardiac medicine, identifying and distinguishing what we now commonly refer to as "good" cholesterol and "bad" cholesterol. In May 2007, the *Journal of Clinical Lipidology* named him the Father of Clinical Lipidology, honoring him for discoveries he made decades ago, now mainstream knowledge in the field.

With Frank T. Lindgren and other research associates, Dr. Gofman discovered and described three major classes of plasma lipoproteins, fat molecules that carry cholesterol in the blood. The team he led at the Donner Laboratory went on to demonstrate the role of lipoproteins in the causation of heart disease.

Dr. Gofman's earliest research was in nuclear physics and chemistry, in close connection to the Manhattan Project. He co-discovered several radioisotopes, notably uranium-233 and its fissionability; he was the third person ever to work with plutonium, and, having devised an early process for separating plutonium from fission products at J. Robert Oppenheimer's request, he was the first chemist ever to try and isolate milligram quantities of plutonium.

In 1963, Dr. Gofman established the Biomedical Research Division for the Livermore National Laboratory, where he was on the cutting edge of research into the connection between chromosomal abnormalities and cancer.

Later in life, Dr. Gofman took on a role as an advocate warning of dangers involved with nuclear power. From 1971 onward, he was the Chairman of the Committee for Nuclear Responsibility. He was awarded the Right Livelihood Award for his work on the effects of the Chernobyl disaster's low-level radiation exposure on the population.

(Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Gofman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Gofman))