Miller School Establishes Scholarship to Honor the Legacy of Beloved Dean

Empathy, patience, and compassion are often the driving forces of top educators—and are just a few of the many strengths that Bernard “Bernie” Fogel, M.D. ’61, offered to students and the Miller School medical community throughout his tenured career. Dr. Fogel, longtime former dean of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, dedicated his life to the advancement of medical education and to developing the talent of the best and brightest medical students.

Bernard “Bernie” Fogel, M.D.

Dr. Fogel, who passed on March 30, 2022 at the age of 85, served as dean of the Miller School from 1981 to 1995. He remained an invested advisor, mentor, and fundraiser at the
school for another decade before retiring. Throughout his career, he played an instrumental role in transforming the Miller School from a regional institution to a nationally-ranked medical program with global reach and reputation.

“He helped put us on the national stage,” said John G. Clarkson, M.D. ’68, who succeeded Dr. Fogel as dean and shared an office with him. “During his time, we became an important institution for AIDS research, diabetes research, and cancer research.”

Perhaps even more critical than his professional accomplishments were his authenticity and compassion, which were deeply valued by all who connected with him. “Most of all, I’ll miss the fact that you could call him anytime, and you felt better after talking to him,” Dr. Clarkson continued. “He had a way of making you feel better about yourself, making you feel better about things.”

During Dr. Fogel’s tenure, he mentored many generations of doctors and created an enduring legacy of excellence, innovation, and empathy at the Miller School.

“He led with grace, authenticity, and a sense of compassion,” said Alex J. Mechaber, M.D. ’94, the president of the Miller School’s Medical Alumni Association. “The example he set is what I try to emulate every day as a leader.”
Beyond his leadership endeavors and success, Dr. Fogel was a clinical force in the pediatric field. He was one of the first recipients to receive the Medical Alumni Association’s Hall of Fame Award in 1996, which recognizes alumni who have made a significant advancement in the medical profession, the community, or society as a whole as a result of their medical education. He received the award for his role as a prime investigator of the immunologic function of an infant with DiGeorge’s syndrome, which led to the first fetal thymic transplant ever performed successfully.

"The respect in which he was held was shared by the entire faculty, patients, and students and produced an environment ready to accept some of the hardships and misfortunes, which challenged every academic medical center," said Laurence B.
Gardner, M.D., professor of medicine and senior advisor to the medical school's dean, Henri R. Ford, M.D., M.H.A.

“Dr. Fogel was instrumental in elevating the Miller School from a regional institution to a truly global one, creating and fostering the programs that have become our hallmarks,” said Dean Ford, also the chief academic officer of the Miller School. “The university and the broader South Florida community owe a great debt to his work.”

Under his leadership as dean, the Miller School experienced a rapid expansion of new programs and added a fourth pillar to its mission statement — community service. He quickly earned a reputation as a bridge-builder who helped cement the bond between the University of Miami and the Jackson Health System, which now stands as one of the few remaining partnerships between a private university and a public hospital.

“When I was awarded our school’s first endowed chair in medical education in 2007, the Bernard J. Fogel Chair in Medical Education, it was the achievement of my lifetime,” said Mark T. O’Connell, M.D., former senior associate dean for medical education.

“Dr. Fogel’s early career path at the Miller School included serving as the school’s first associate dean for medical education, in response to medical students’ concerns about the structure and teaching in the curriculum. When he rose to Dean and Chief Academic Officer, he never lost sight of the primacy of the school’s mission to educate medical students, even as he led our enormous growth in basic and clinical research and development of the faculty practice plan,” said Dr. O’Connell. “Bernie Fogel was an inspiration and role model, and I can
never thank him enough for giving me the opportunity to focus my career on medical education and enjoy all of the satisfaction and rewards that come with that calling.”

Dr. Mechaber, former senior associate dean for undergraduate medical education at the Miller School, was also awarded the Fogel chair in 2016.

Bernard “Bernie” Fogel, M.D. ‘61 and Alex J. Mechaber, M.D. ’94

“The greatest honor in my professional career was to be awarded the Bernard J. Fogel Chair in Medical Education,” said Dr. Mechaber. “It signified the Miller School’s commitment to medical education, but more importantly recognized the trailblazer that Bernie was in putting the Miller School on the map in the medical education community.”

Through the work he accomplished and the lives he touched, his legacy lives on and continues to inspire.
“Although I did not have the good fortune to know or meet Dr. Fogel personally, I am honored and humbled by the privilege to serve as the Bernard J. Fogel Chair in Medical Education at the Miller School of Medicine,” said Latha Chandran M.D., M.P.H., current holder of the Fogel Chair and the executive dean for medical education. “I have read about Dr. Fogel and am deeply inspired by his sense of inclusion, and community engagement focusing on motivating minority students to pursue health careers.”

Dr. Fogel is survived by his wife, Judy, and their daughters Lori, Wendy, and Amy, and their grandchildren: Michael, Daniel, Sam, Rachel, Josh, and Noah.

Everyone at the Miller School of Medicine will miss Dr. Fogel, who has been a part of the Miller family since he started medical school in 1957 but will ensure that his commitment to growth and education will endure.

Towards this effort, the Miller School is establishing the Bernard J. Fogel, M.D. ’61 Memorial Scholarship to ensure his legacy will impact future generations of students and that his name will remain synonymous with medical education. This scholarship will be awarded to deserving and qualified students pursuing a medical education at the Miller School, who embody the innovative and compassionate spirit of Dr. Fogel.

The scholarship fund is currently open and is welcoming donations in honor of Dr. Fogel’s legacy. If you would like to participate, you can do so by contacting Megan Brahimi at m.brahimi@miami.edu or by visiting: miami.edu/fogelmemorialscholarship