

# Dr. Ram Ayyar, Longest Serving UM Neurology Professor, Passes Away

Ram Ayyar, M.D., FAAN, longtime professor of neurology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, died peacefully on October 11 at the age of 83.

Dr. Ayyar joined the faculty of the Department of Neurology in 1976. He served as Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs in Neurology from 1994 to 2007, and as Director of the Neuromuscular Medicine Fellowship Program from 1976 to 2018. He remained on faculty in the Neuromuscular Division and continued to see patients until his retirement in 2019.



Dr. Ram Ayyar

Dr. Ayyar taught generations of residents and fellows, many of whom went on to prestigious academic and practice positions in Florida, the U.S. and around the world. He maintained a close relationship with his former trainees, who held him in high esteem. In addition, for a remarkable 42 years he ran the annual Neurology Update Course on behalf of the Department of Neurology, drawing on his vast network of colleagues to serve as faculty.

“Dr. Ayyar has made a lasting impact on our department and many neurologists and patients throughout the world,” said Ralph L. Sacco, M.D., M.S., professor and chair of neurology and the Olemberg Family Chair in Neurological Disorders. “He

will always be remembered for his superb clinical skills, as well as his charming wit, cunning smile, and warm laughter that we were all so fortunate to experience.”

Dr. Ayyar received the Department of Neurology’s Outstanding Teacher of the Year award multiple times and was recognized in 2019 by the Association of Indian Neurologists in America with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

“Ram was a kind man with a wonderful sense of humor,” said Michael Benatar, M.D., Ph.D., professor of neurology and the Walter Bradley Chair in ALS Research. “An educator and clinician at heart, he loved to teach and would always make time for any patient who needed to be seen. Ram was the longest serving faculty member in the history of the department, and he was beloved by all.

“We already miss him greatly.”

Dr. Ayyar was born in 1937 in Kerala, India, the son of Colonel R.D. and Kamala Ayyar. He completed his medical training at Trivandrum Medical College and his residency and M.D. in New Delhi. In 1966 he went to Newcastle upon Tyne, in the northeast of England, to continue his training under two giants of British neurology, Professor Henry Miller and Lord John Walton. He received the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh) in 1966.

After Newcastle, he continued his specialty training with Dr. Edward Lambert, a pioneer in the field of electromyography, at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He then spent four years on the faculty at Wayne State University in Detroit.

Dr. Ayyar wrote more than 110 papers and book chapters, and he was a noted expert in ciguatera poisoning and Lambert-Eaton syndrome. He was a renowned diagnostician in the British mode. He would listen carefully to the patient, ask a few pertinent questions, perform the crucial parts of the neurological examination, and come to the diagnosis, which was rarely wrong.

Dr. Ayyar is survived by Margret, his wife of 47 years, and his sons Davey and Nathan.

The family will hold a memorial service at a later date, when gatherings can more readily be arranged.