

## DR. BERNARD G. GREENBERG: A Visionary Leader

It would be difficult to exaggerate the powerful impact of **DR. BERNARD GREENBERG'S** vision and creativity upon the UNC School of Public Health and beyond.

A New York native who served as an infantry captain in World War II, Greenberg completed a doctoral program in experimental statistics at N.C. State University in 1949. That year, at the age of 29, he was appointed chair of the newly formed Department of Biostatistics at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Greenberg's leadership skills brought immediate prestige and recognition to the department. He insisted that his faculty be focused equally on research, teaching and practice. He was accomplished at obtaining research and training grants, and those efforts brought fresh talent to UNC. By 1965, the department had sufficient foundation to offer a doctorate in biostatistics; soon after, master's and doctoral programs emphasizing mental health, environmental health, genetics, demography and health services research were offered.

The national impact and global reach of Greenberg's work were profound.

- He received the first of many training grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) which allowed him to travel abroad to train students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty (1953).

- He published the first available article (in *The American Statistician*) on the design and conduct of clinical trials (1959).

- He testified before Congress that statistics had been used inappropriately to determine the effectiveness of the polio vaccine—and that the vaccine actually increased the incidence of polio (1962).

- He chaired a committee appointed by NIH's National Advisory Heart Council

and directed to formulate a process for large, multi-center clinical studies. The resultant "Greenberg Report," commissioned by the National Heart Institute (now the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute), was considered landmark. (See page 16 and [www.sph.unc.edu/cph/weblinks](http://www.sph.unc.edu/cph/weblinks).)

Greenberg's academic career was marked by many honors, including the American Public Health Association's Bronfman Award for contributions to research and education (1966) and elected membership in the International Statistical Institute, the American Epidemiological Society and the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine.

His University of North Carolina honors included a Kenan Distinguished Professorship (1969) and receipt of the O. Max Gardner Award for contributions to human welfare (1983).

While devoted to his research, teaching and administrative obligations, Greenberg was, by all accounts, a person involved in the lives of his colleagues and students and highly esteemed by them. He was a good judge of character and talent, able to develop the department quickly by peopling it wisely. He had a fierce sense of social justice, continually exhibited in the agenda he set as department chair and later, in 1972, as dean of the School of Public Health. Whether inviting minority students to have a voice in School government, or focusing on national and international health challenges that included



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access to health care, population growth, the environment, mental illness, substance abuse and injury prevention, Greenberg was a visionary in the area of human rights.

His son, Dr. Raymond Greenberg, followed in his father's footsteps, serving as founding dean of the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University and now president of the Medical University of South Carolina. (Read more about Ray Greenberg at [www.sph.unc.edu/cph/weblinks](http://www.sph.unc.edu/cph/weblinks).) His other two children are also UNC graduates. His son, Stanley, lives in Western Galilee, Israel, and daughter, Frances Greenberg Klein, resides in Wilmington, Del.

His wife, Ruth, who received a graduate degree in chemistry from Yale, is still a powerful and beloved advocate for the UNC School of Public Health and attends School events regularly.

A lifelong nonsmoker, Greenberg died of lung cancer in 1985. ■

— BY LINDA KASTLEMAN