

## In Memoriam



Dr. Robert Millikan

### **Robert Millikan**

Dr. Robert Millikan, Barbara Sorenson Hulka Distinguished Professor in Cancer Epidemiology, died Oct. 7. He was 55.

A member since 1993 of the School's epidemiology faculty and of UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, Dr. Millikan's research brought hope for better understanding and treatment of breast cancer, particularly for young African-American women who disproportionately die from the disease.

Data from UNC Lineberger's Carolina Breast Cancer Study, which Dr. Millikan directed for more than 15 years, demonstrated that black women under age 45 are more likely to be diagnosed with aggressive types of breast cancer than are women of European ancestry. The NCI program grant, which he led, will result in a better understanding of this significant health disparity by collecting information about more than 5,000 women to explore biological, environmental and epidemiologic reasons for the difference in cancer incidence.

Dr. Millikan earned undergraduate and doctoral degrees in veterinary medicine from University of California at Davis and a Master of Public Health and Doctor of Philosophy in epidemiology from University of California at Los Angeles. He was a postdoctoral fellow in molecular biology at Harvard Medical School and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and completed internships in medicine and surgery at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine.

His wisdom and kindness will be missed greatly.

### **John Vernon**

John Andrew Vernon, PhD, 43, died on June 19. An assistant professor of health policy and management at UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health since 2008, he earned an undergraduate degree at Duke University, master's degree at North Carolina State University and doctorate from the University of London, all in economics. He also held a doctorate in management science from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. Prior to joining the UNC public health faculty, Dr. Vernon served as senior economic policy adviser in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, faculty research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research and assistant professor of finance at the University of Connecticut. On several occasions, he was called upon for expert testimony at Congressional committee hearings.

### **James Abernathy**

James R. Abernathy, PhD, retired professor of biostatistics, died Sept. 3, at age 86. He was a well-known international demographer who, over his 30-year career, pioneered statistical

research in maternal and child health programs, epidemiological investigations, public health nursing and dental health services, and served as a statistical consultant to national agencies, including the National Center for Health Statistics and the World Health Organization. An alumnus, he joined the School's faculty in 1965. He directed the International Program of Laboratories for Population Statistics (POPLAB), a USAID-funded project conducted through Carolina Population Center, from 1980 to 1983.

### **Richard Udry**

J. Richard Udry, PhD, Kenan Distinguished Professor of maternal and child health and sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, died on July 29, after a long illness. He was 83. During his nearly 50-year career, Dr. Udry pioneered research that integrated biological and sociological models of human behavior in the areas of adolescent behavior and health, sexual behavior and women's gender roles, and developed the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). He directed UNC's Carolina Population Center from 1977 to 1992.

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