

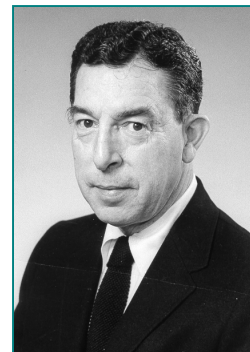
## OBITUARIES

### William K. Riker, M.D.

1925-2004

Dr. William Riker of Lake Oswego died on October 23, 2004, at the age of 79. The cause was lung cancer.

Dr. Riker was born August 31, 1925 in the Bronx, New York, the son of Walter F. and Eleanor Louise Riker. He attended New York City public elementary and high schools graduating in June 1942. He then entered Columbia College of the Columbia University in September 1942, and was drafted into the U.S Navy Reserve in 1943, serving during World War II until his discharge in June 1946. He returned to Columbia College from which he graduated in June 1949. While at Columbia he was involved in the University Broadcasting Station and did live play-by-play of Columbia's home basketball games. WOR, a local New York station, offered him a job as a sportscaster. He declined, however, because he was accepted for admission in September 1949 at Cornell University Medical College in New York City. He obtained his M.D. degree there in 1953 and went on to an Internship on the Second (Cornell) Medical Division at Bellevue Hospital. After his Internship he decided on a career in academic medicine and joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.



Thus began a distinguished medical teaching and research career spanning more than 40 years. In that time he was appointed to medical faculties at the University of Utah School of Medicine in Salt Lake City, and Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where he became Chairman of the Department of Pharmacology. In 1969 he was recruited to the Oregon Health & Sciences University in Portland as Professor and Chairman of the Pharmacology Department. He held that position until his retirement in 1990. He remained active in teaching and research until 1997 when he became Emeritus Professor at OHSU.

During his long career he also served on many committees at the University and at the National Institutes of Health. He was a member of the Scientific Advisory Council of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association Foundation. In 1975 he was selected as a Unesco Scholar serving as a scientific adviser of a new medical research institute in Szeged, Hungary. He was actively involved in regional and national scientific societies and was elected President of the Western Pharmacology Society and the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics.

His scientific research focused on drug effects on the nervous system, particularly on synaptic transmission. His clinical interests were in the treatment of epilepsy and stroke. He was an important contributor to the founding of the Oregon Epilepsy Center and, together with his wife Dr. Leena Mela-Riker, of the OHSU Stroke Research Center.

In 1982 he was elected to the Cosmos Club of Washington, D.C. Dr. Riker was an active genealogist and was a life member of the Genealogical Forum of Oregon and the Holland Society of New York. He was an avid fly-fisherman, and during his summers in Jackson Hole, he was often seen casting on the Snake, the Flat Creek and the Fishcreek. In 1995 he and his wife moved a historic Jackson Hole log cabin to their property in Wilson, Wyoming.

In 1947 he married Carmela Louise DePamphilis. She died in 1981. She was the mother of Dr. Riker's three surviving daughters Eleanor Wellstead of Portland, Gainor Riker of Warren and Victoria Smith of West Linn. In 1983 he married Dr. Leena Mela, who survives him. Other survivors include two stepdaughters, Marja Viluksela and Malla Mela of Finland; four grandchildren, Alex, Eve, Henrik and Nina; and a sister Virginia Huebner of Wells, Maine. His older brother, Walter F. Riker Jr., M.D., former chairman of the Pharmacology Department at the Cornell University Medical College in New York City, died earlier this year.

*Note: Dr. Riker wrote this obituary himself. It was edited by his family for the dates and events related to his death.*

## DEATH NOTICES

ASPET notes with sympathy the passing of the following members

Roberts C. Anderson  
John E. Baer  
Richard Bukoski  
Herman C. B. Denber  
Fred W. Ellis  
Vernon A. Green

Edgar T. Iwamoto  
Harry K. Iwamoto  
David B. Ludlum  
Stephen J. Riggi  
William K. Riker  
Verald K. Rowe

Melvin J. Silver  
Louis D. Van De Kar  
Vaman S. Waravdekar  
Brett K. Warren  
Murray Weiner

