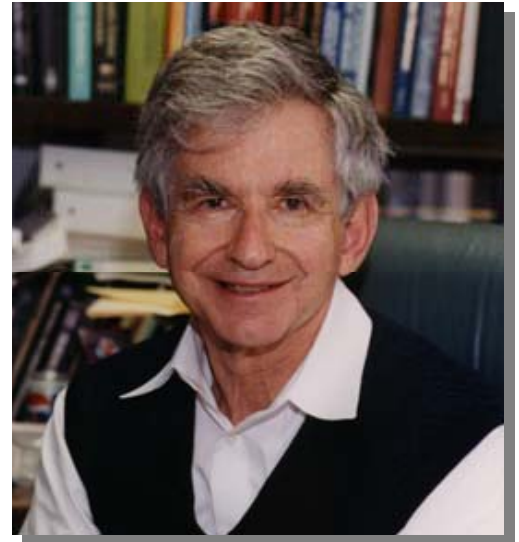


Human Genetics Community Mourns the Loss of One of the Field's Great Leaders, Dr. Charles J. Epstein

1933-2011

"We all respect, revere and love him!" Those were the words used by Dr. Arno Motulsky in introducing **Charles J. Epstein, MD**, when he was awarded the prestigious William Allan Award by the [American Society of Human Genetics \(ASHG\)](#) in 2001. In 2010, he was honored as the recipient of ASHG's McKusick Leadership Award, which is presented to an individual whose achievements have fostered and enriched the development of various human genetics disciplines. Dr. Epstein was elected as President of ASHG in 1996, and he also served for seven years as Editor of the Society's journal, [The American Journal of Human Genetics \(AJHG\)](#).



Dr. Epstein's major research interests were in the biochemistry and genetics of early embryonic development, the pathogenesis of Down syndrome, and genetic approaches to the study of free radical defense mechanisms. Beyond establishing a model medical genetics clinic and enhancing the fields of biochemical and clinical genetics, he also helped establish and legitimize the profession of genetic counseling in the late 1970s.

After serving as President of the American Board of Medical Genetics from 1990-1991, Dr. Epstein led our colleagues in the human genetics field through a very rough time. When the counselors and medical geneticists were forced to split, he made sure that both groups survived and prospered. He was then elected to serve as President of the American College of Medical Genetics from 2003-2005. Dr. Epstein was also recently named as recipient of the 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award from the American College of Medical Genetics.



Dr. Epstein was educated at Harvard, where he graduated with honors, and then trained in Internal Medicine, followed by a research position at NIH. After passing through Seattle, where he was mentored by Dr. Arno Motulsky, Epstein settled at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) where he thrived in the Department of Pediatrics, becoming a consummate clinician-scientist in his positions as Professor of Pediatrics and Chief of the Division of Medical Genetics. A distinguished endowed chair at UCSF was recently named in his honor, to recognize his decades of service. He authored over 290 peer-reviewed articles and wrote several books, and served as an outstanding Editor of *The American Journal of Human Genetics* for seven years.

Dr. Epstein exhibited extraordinary strength and courage when we became one of the early targets of domestic terrorism, receiving a bomb from "Unabomber" Ted Kaczynski that almost killed him in 1993. However, with tenacity he survived, and with brilliant insight and much caring, Dr. Epstein gave his ASHG Presidential Address in 1996, urging the genetics community to stand up and make our case for careful research and strong advocacy while still being careful not to

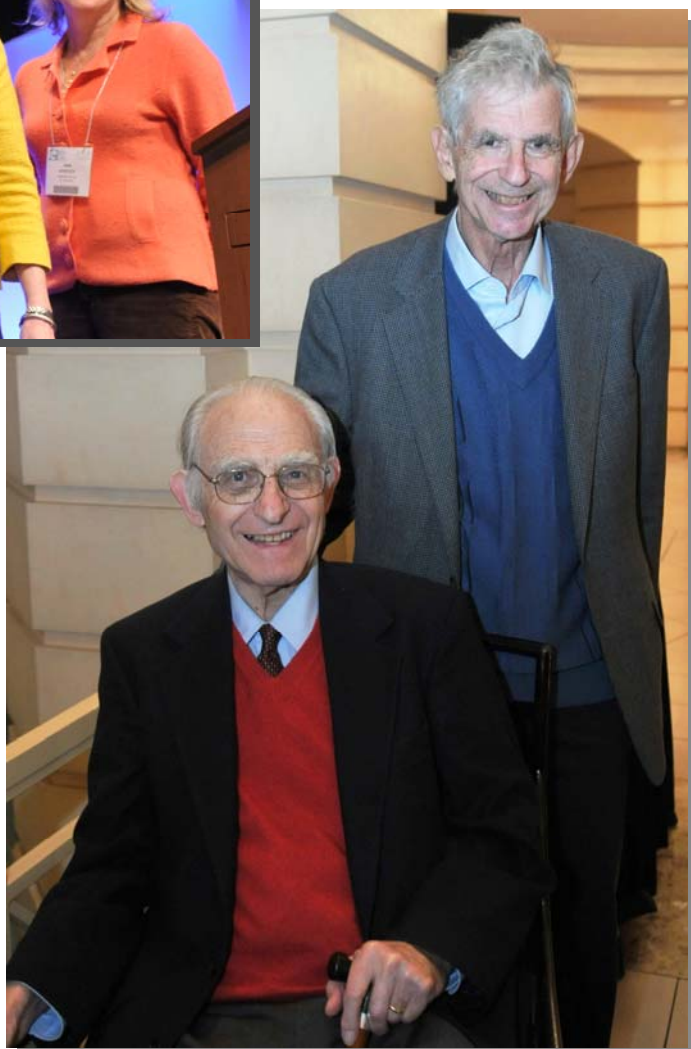
claim or promise too much. He told us to be “ever mindful that we do not function in isolation, and to be true to our responsibilities that transcend the purely professional.”

Dr. Epstein, fondly known by so many as “Charlie,” is survived by his wonderful scientist wife, Dr. Lois Epstein, and children David, Jonathon, Paul and Joanna. There are numerous students, postdoctoral fellows, genetic counselors, and colleagues who are proud to call him their mentor. Charlie has taught the entire genetics community much.

Dr. Charlie Epstein will be long remembered not only for his great scientific insights, but for his gracious leadership of our professional community, and, of course, for his resilience, generosity and inspiration to so many throughout his distinguished career.



Dr. Charles Epstein receives the 2010 McKusick Leadership Award at ASHG's 60th Annual Meeting.



Charles Epstein and his mentor, Dr. Arno Motulsky, share a moment together at the ASHG 2010 meeting.