IN MEMORIAM

Louis K. Diamond, MD
1902–1999

Dr. Louis Diamond, 97, died June 14, 1999, at his home in Los Angeles, CA. Dr. Diamond is best known to blood bankers for, in 1932, describing the problem of blood group incompatibility between mother and fetus. He is credited with developing the treatment for the problem in 1940 when he performed exchange transfusions for newborns suffering from erythroblastosis fetalis or hemolytic disease of the newborn (HDN). Exchange transfusions reduced the deaths due to HDN from 50 percent to 5 percent, and he is credited with saving thousands of lives each year before the development of Rh-immune globulin.

Dr. Diamond came to this country from Russia at the age of 2. He graduated from Harvard University in 1923 and Harvard Medical School in 1927 and started one of the first pediatric hematology research laboratories in the country at Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Boston. In 1930, he recognized and described thalassemia in Greek and Italian children. At least two other diseases bear his name: Diamond-Blackfan syndrome, a congenital anemia in children, described in 1938; and Gardner-Diamond syndrome, an autoreactive cell sensitivity found in young females, described in 1950. He also participated in the first use of chemotherapy in childhood leukemia.

Dr. Diamond was at Harvard for 41 years as professor of pediatrics and head of hematology and associate physician-in-chief at Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Boston. He retired from Harvard and moved to the University of California in San Francisco as a professor of pediatrics and went to UCLA in 1987 as an active professor emeritus, remaining active into his 90s.

In 1963, Dr. Diamond won the Karl Landsteiner Award, the most prestigious award of the American Association of Blood Banks. He is credited with being a founding member of the AABB and with helping to organize the national Red Cross system for blood donations and collections, when he served from 1948–1950 as the technical director of the newly formed National Blood Program.

The contributions of Dr. Louis Diamond to transfusion medicine and to the improvement of patient care will be remembered and honored by his colleagues.

Delores Mallory
Editor-in-Chief

Mary McGinniss
Managing Editor

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter to the Editors

“Those Were the Days”

I first heard about SCARF set up by John Moulds, about 20 years ago, and I so wanted to be a part of it. I was not sure that our service would be accepted as a member, but I wrote to John and received a positive reply. He told me that a second SCARF subscriber list was being compiled and that I could become a member. Among the first specimens that I received were two samples of blood from Gerbich-negative patients, one a Ge:2,3 and the other Ge:2,3.

As chances go, we received blood from a donor whose blood group was not clear. Our first look at the donor’s blood showed us that the serum of this patient contained an anti-HI. The donor had never been transfused. During our initial investigation, we included the reference samples we had received from SCARF and, lo and behold, the antibody in the serum was anti-Ge2 and the cells of the donor were Ge:2,3. We sent this specimen to Ruth Sanger in the MRC Unit in London, and Ruth, in her usual way, wrote a wonderful letter to confirm our findings. Of course, the solving of this case was due to SCARF.

This is only one of the cases in which SCARF helped us to solve cases. Many of them were emergencies in which blood was required for transfusion, and the use of the reference samples we had stored allowed us to locally sort the specificities out. I often thought that the patient who required blood would have been in great