

Obituary

Albert J Plummer, 1908–2002

Neuropsychopharmacology (2003) **28**, 199. doi:10.1038/sj.npp.1300041



For anyone who had the privilege of knowing Al Plummer, the news of his passing must have evoked feelings of sadness and respect for a colleague, who had devoted his professional life to the principles of science. His field of primary interest was the understanding of pharmacotherapy as a means of therapeutic intervention. Trained initially as a chemist, his interests shifted gradually towards the area of the life sciences. His extensive work is documented in over 150 publications, in which he participated either as author or co-author. Most of this work was performed at Ciba Pharmaceutical Company in Summit, NJ, where he rose over the years from the rank of Senior Pharmacologist (1949) to Executive Director of Biological Research, the position he held until his retirement in 1973. It was his work on 'ataraxic' agents in the early fifties that became his link to the emerging American College of Neuropsychopharmacology. With it eventually came his membership in the College (1961).

The merits of his contributions to pharmacology are amply documented in his impressive bibliography, but it was his vision of facilitating the relations between academia and industry, as well as between basic and clinical sciences, that was most relevant to his membership in ACNP. He sensed early the great potential therapeutic benefit for a vast mental health population that suddenly became accessible to pharmacotherapy. Behind his affable personality there was the strong will and persistence necessary to pursue these objectives, much of it thankless behind-the-scenes activity. To see progress along these lines must have been very gratifying to him in his later years.

AJ Plummer, the man, was a very private individual, for whom the welfare of his family was of primary concern. Our sympathy goes to his surviving family members. May the knowledge of the fulfilment of his life provide solace and comfort for their loss.

JA Schneider

Wilmington, Delaware, USA