

## **ASIP Mourns the Loss of ASIP Benefactor and Former President Robert E. Stowell**

Dr. Robert E. Stowell, benefactor to ASIP and President of the American Society for Experimental Pathology (ASEP, 1964-1965) and of the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists (AAPB, 1971), died at the age of 96 on November 20, 2011 of a cerebral vascular accident at his home.

Dr. Stowell was the founding chair of the Department of Pathology at the University of California School of Medicine at Davis and was an internationally renowned pathologist and educator. Among his many other leadership positions (see accompanying obituary from the UC Davis for more details), he served as President of the two pathology societies (ASEP and AAPB) that merged in 1976 to form the American Association of Pathologists. The latter was reincorporated as the American Society for Investigative Pathology (ASIP) in 1992. In 1990, he received the Society's Gold-Headed Cane Award.

In 1986, Dr. Stowell donated an endowment to the American Association of Pathologists "to support a series of lectures or symposia at the annual meetings." The endowment, which currently funds the Stowell "Trends in Experimental Pathology" Symposium at the ASIP Annual Meeting, stands to date as the largest benefaction to the Society. On a personal note, I was proud to be selected as the organizer of the 1995 ASIP Stowell Symposium and looked forward to speaking with him each year, since he maintained his interest in science and pathology and regularly attended the ASIP Annual Meeting well into his 90s, until his health declined a few years ago.

The Stowell family requests that donations be made to the Stowell Medical Students Assistance Fund. Checks should be made payable to the "UC Davis Foundation." Please indicate that it is intended for the Stowell Fund. Checks should be mailed to: Health Sciences Advancement, 4900 Broadway, Suite 1150, Sacramento, CA 95820.

Prepared by: Mark E. Sobel, MD, PhD, ASIP Executive Officer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (from UC Davis):  
Nov. 23, 2011

## DR. ROBERT STOWELL, FOUNDING CHAIR OF UC DAVIS PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT, DIES AT 96

(SACRAMENTO, Calif.) — Dr. Robert E. Stowell, the founding chair of the Department of Pathology at the UC Davis School of Medicine and an internationally renowned pathologist and educator, died on Nov. 20 of a cerebral vascular accident at his home in El Macero, Calif. He was 96.

"The breadth and depth of Dr. Stowell's impact on the field of pathology is immense," said Claire Pomeroy, UC Davis vice chancellor for Human Health Sciences and dean of the School of Medicine. "Throughout his long and illustrious career, Dr. Stowell's work had a tremendous benefit on people locally, nationally and internationally, and is still felt today."

"Dr. Stowell was an important and beloved member of our faculty, and he will be greatly missed," said Lydia Pleotis Howell, current chair of the UC Davis Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. "We certainly owe a lot to him as founding chair of our department, and for his many contributions since, including his very generous gift to establish the Stowell Chair for Experimental Pathology. Dr. Stowell left a wonderful legacy here and he lives in on the work that we do in our department and school."

During his nearly 60-year career, Dr. Stowell was widely influential as a prominent leader of national and international pathology organizations. In 1955, he was a founding member of the International Academy of Pathology (IAP), the organization that grew from the International Association of Medical Museums (IAMM). The IAMM represented the practice of pathology for the first 50 years of the 20th Century, while the IAP fulfilled this role in the second 50 years.

From 1959-1967, Dr. Stowell served as scientific director at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, a federal institution focused on diagnostic consultation, education and research in pathology. The facility held 95 million tissue samples and had served as a global resource for disease diagnosis and analysis for nearly 150 years before closing on Sept. 15, 2011, due to government cost-cutting initiatives.

He served as chair of the president of the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists in 1971. In 1990, the American Society for Investigative Pathology bestowed upon Dr. Stowell its Gold-Headed Cane Award, the nation's highest award in pathology.

Dr. Stowell was born on Dec. 25, 1914, in Cashmere, Wash. He received his bachelor's degree from Stanford University in 1936, his M.D. from Stanford Medical School in 1941, and his Ph.D. in pathology from Washington University in 1944. After medical school, Dr. Stowell worked as a research assistant at the Barnard Free Skin and Cancer Hospital in St. Louis, and then as an assistant professor of pathology at Washington University.

From 1946-1947, Dr. Stowell was an advanced medical fellow of the Commonwealth Fund at the Institute for Cell Research in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1948, Dr. Stowell was appointed as chair of the Department of Oncology at the University of Kansas, and in 1951, he became chair of the university's Department of Pathology and Oncology.

In 1967, Dr. Stowell came to the UC Davis School of Medicine as the founding chair of its Department of Pathology. He served as chair until June 1969, when he was appointed director of the UC Davis Primate Center. He returned to the pathology department in 1971 and retired in 1982, although he continued to teach medical students as a volunteer until 2001.

At UC Davis, Dr. Stowell served as vice chair of the School of Medicine's first admissions committee. He helped create the school's first curricula and courses, built new programs and recruited new faculty.

While on the faculty at UC Davis, Dr. Stowell led an extensive and detailed review of research related to controversies surrounding the artificial sweetener Aspartame, which the Food and Drug Administration

would not approve without an impartial, outside review. The review was conducted mainly at UC Davis under the direction of Dr. Stowell, who also coordinated reviews performed at the University of Maryland and Northwestern University.

The reviews found no major discrepancies, and the FDA subsequently approved Aspartame, which is used in the artificial sweetener Equal.

In 1980, Dr. Stowell organized the first group of U.S. academic pathologists to visit the People's Republic of China following President Richard Nixon's historic visit to that country in 1972, which led to the normalization of relations between the two countries.

In 1991, Dr. Stowell and his wife, the late Eva Mae Stowell, endowed the Robert E. Stowell Lectureship, which supports the annual appointment of a distinguished scientist as a visiting lecturer at the School of Medicine.

Dr. Stowell is survived by his daughter, Susan of Davis, Calif.; his son, Rob, and his wife, Jean of Tahoe City, Calif.; grandchildren, Dave Tambor of Roseville, Calif., and Ken and Lauren Martin of Roseville, Calif.; and great-grandchildren, Christian and Catherine Martin of Roseville, Calif.

At Dr. Stowell's request, no memorial service will be held.

The family requests that donations be made to the Stowell Medical Students Assistance Fund. Checks should be made payable to the "UC Davis Foundation" and indicate that it is intended for the Stowell Fund. Checks should be mailed to:

Health Sciences Advancement  
4900 Broadway, Suite 1150  
Sacramento, CA 95820

The UC Davis School of Medicine is among the nation's leading medical schools, recognized for its research and primary-care programs. The school offers fully accredited master's degree programs in public health and in informatics, and its combined M.D.-Ph.D. program is training the next generation of physician-scientists to conduct high-impact research and translate discoveries into better clinical care. Along with being a recognized leader in medical research, the school is committed to serving underserved communities and advancing rural health. For more information, visit UC Davis School of Medicine at [medschool.ucdavis.edu](http://medschool.ucdavis.edu).

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