David L. Rimoin, MD, PhD, long-time colleague, friend, and leader in the world of human genetics died May 27 of pancreatic cancer. Dr. Rimoin was a professor of Pediatrics, Medicine, and Human Genetics at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Steven Spielberg Chair and Director of the Medical Genetics Institute at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

Born and raised in Montreal, Canada, he received his bachelor’s degree with honors in genetics from McGill in 1957, where he also earned his medical and master of science (in Genetics) degrees, both awarded in 1961. He trained in Pediatrics at McGill and Pediatrics and Medical Genetics at Johns Hopkins and received his PhD from Hopkins working with Dr. Victor McKusick for his work in the genetics of endocrine disorders. He quickly became one of the world’s experts in this emerging field and established extensively used clinical services and research activities with NIH support that brought this field into the forefront of developmental biology.

He published over 390 peer-reviewed articles, wrote, edited, or coedited eight major books in our field. Over his years at Washington University in St. Louis, Harbor-UCLA, and Cedars, Dr. Rimoin mentored and trained more than 100 M.D., Ph.D., or M.D.-Ph.D. pre- and postdoctoral students, the great majority of whom have gone on to academic positions throughout the world leaving a legacy that may remain unmatched in our field.

Dr. Rimoin was recognized as one of the most influential leaders in Human and Medical Genetics by being elected and honored by each organization he touched. He was the founding president of the American Board of Medical Genetics (1979–1983) and then the founding president of the American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG) (1992–1998). David served as a board member of ASHG (1977–1979) and was elected president of the ASHG in 1984. In 1993, he served as president of the Council of Medical Genetic Organizations and as president of the American College of Medical Genetics Foundation (1998–2002). He also received March of Dimes Colonel Harland Sanders Award for Lifetime Achievement in Genetic Sciences (1997). His global contributions have been identified with his election to the Johns Hopkins University Society of Scholars (1990), membership in the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences (1992), and election to Fellowship in the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1997). He was the inaugural winner of the Victor McKusick Leadership Award of ASHG in 2006 given in recognition of his enduring vision, creativity, and enormous contributions to the field of human and medical genetics. Dr. Rimoin will be greatly missed by his colleagues and friends, as we recognize that our community has been diminished by the loss of a giant in medical genetics.

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