



Dr Robert Clyde Hastings

Dr. Robert Clyde Hastings died on December 15, 2015 in Memphis, Tennessee, USA following a hard fought battle with cancer. He was 76 years old.

Dr. Hastings, known as Bob to his friends and colleagues, was born on April 23, 1938. He grew up in the country around Covington, Tennessee and attended Vanderbilt University where he took his bachelor's degree. He obtained his medical education at the University of Tennessee, graduating *summa cum laude* in 1962. After a few years of medical practice Bob returned to school taking his Ph. D. degree from Tulane University, School of Medicine in Pharmacology.

Bob spent the remainder of his working career at the National Hansen's Disease Programs in Carville, LA, USA as a commissioned officer in the US Public Health Service. His distinguished career at the hospital saw him rise from staff physician

through Chief of the Department of Pharmacology to the Chief of the Laboratory Research Branch where significant contributions to the treatment and care of leprosy patients were discovered and implemented under Bob's tutelage. Primary among these contributions was Bob's formative research on thalidomide and various antimicrobial regimens for the treatment of leprosy. This work resulted in nearly 80 peer-reviewed publications and in 1980 he was presented the Meritorious Service Medal by then - U.S. Surgeon General Julius B. Richmond in recognition of his international reputation as a researcher in Hansen's Disease therapy.

For 24 years Bob served as editor of the International Journal of Leprosy, encouraging and promoting the publication of many reports from young investigators. He spent countless hours assisting them in revising manuscripts for

publication. He was also the Editor of 'Leprosy', the textbook published in 1985 with contributions from the major leprologists of the time. This has been the standard text on this disease for more than 25 years, and is on the shelf of nearly everyone working on this disease today.

During the 1980's Bob built a research group at Carville with the goal of bringing the disciplines of modern cell and molecular biology to bear on the intractable problems of leprosy. I was lucky

enough to be one of the young investigators he recruited. We all worked and learned leprosy alongside Bob and other greats in the field, like C.K. Job. The laboratory he built in the 80's remains as vibrant today as in the days he lead it with intelligence and grace. We all felt his absence upon retirement and now we will miss his counsel as he has left this realm.

- Tom Gillis