

## OBITUARY

Felix Sagher, M.D.

1908–1982



Professor Felix Sagher was born in Innsbruck, Austria, and studied medicine and, later, dermatology in Prague. Upon completing his studies in 1938, he emigrated to Palestine, where he joined the Department of Dermatology

and Venereology of the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem. This association continued until his death. He was appointed lecturer in 1950, associate professor in 1953, professor in 1958, and professor emeritus in 1976. He was appointed chairman of the Department of Dermatology and Venereology in 1956, a position he held until his retirement 20 years later.

During 1947 and 1948, Professor Sagher studied in the United States, dividing his time among the Mayo Clinic, the New York Skin and Cancer Hospital, and the National Hansen's Disease Center. Subsequently, he served briefly as visiting professor of dermatology at the University of California School of Medicine in Los Angeles. During his career, he authored or co-authored more than 160 scientific papers, as well as a number of monographs and book chapters. In addition to his academic responsibilities, he accepted many organizational responsibilities. He was for many years a member of the International League of Dermatological Societies and secretary-treasurer of its governing committee, secretary and later president of the Israel Dermatological Society,

a member of the WHO Expert Committee on Leprosy, co-editor of *DERMATOLOGICA*, and a contributing editor of the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY*. Finally, he was the recipient of many honors. He was an honorary or corresponding member of many national and international dermatologic societies, and was awarded numerous prizes.

His contributions to leprosy research and the care of leprosy patients in Israel began in 1948, upon his return to Israel from the United States, when he was appointed head of the Government Hospital for Hansen's Disease in Jerusalem, a position he was to hold for 28 years. Although he pursued a variety of activities during his professional career, leprosy research and teaching clearly captured the lion's share of his interest. Fully one-fourth of his numerous scientific publications dealt with leprosy. Among his more important contributions to our understanding of the pathogenesis and treatment of leprosy were his description of the "isopathic phenomenon," the term he applied to the alteration of tissue reactivity of lepromatous patients, in which injection of any of a wide variety of substances (including India ink and BCG) provokes tissue changes characteristic of lepromatous leprosy; his collaboration in the discovery of the efficacy of thalidomide in treatment of erythema nodosum leprosum; and his studies of motor nerve conduction velocity in leprosy patients.

The passing from the scene of one so active, who has contributed as significantly as had Professor Sagher, has resulted in a void that will not be easily filled.

—Jacob Sheskin  
Louis Levy