

## Henrik Blum, Professor Emeritus and Leader in Field of Health Policy

**Henrik L. Blum, M.D., M.P.H.**, professor emeritus of health administration and planning at the University of California, Berkeley, and a pioneer in health care reform, died at age 90 on Jan. 3, 2006, at his home in Oakland, California.

Considered the father of health planning, Blum saw the need to impart structure and organization into a health care system that was disjointed, inefficient and, above all, inequitable.

“Until the passage of Medicare and Medicaid legislation in the mid-1960s, the provision of medical services for the poor and elderly was virtually nonexistent,” said Richard Bailey, UC Berkeley professor emeritus of health policy and administration and a colleague of Blum’s for more than three decades. “Reliance on the charity of local physicians and hospitals was usually demeaning, while the availability of services at public health clinics and hospitals run by counties and municipalities was spotty and notoriously underfunded. The massive infusion of federal funding made everyone aware of critical shortages of physicians, nurses, dentists and other health professionals, as well as facilities in which to provide services.”

In this environment, Blum envisioned a comprehensive health system for the United States that actively involved consumer and provider participation in decision-making about the types of health care services to be made available locally, regionally, and nationally.

Howard Barkan, one of Blum’s former graduate students at UC Berkeley, noted that some of Blum’s ideas for health care delivery are now taken for granted.

“Dr. Blum made a major conceptual breakthrough in rational planning for health care and health services resources, and that is the idea of locating services where they are going to be needed,” said Barkan, who is now a biostatistician and research methodologist at Kaiser Permanente. “As obvious as that sounds now, in the 1960s and 1970s, it was radical.” Barkan added that Blum was an inspirational and influential mentor to his students.

In 1937, Blum earned his B.S. degree in chemistry from UC Berkeley. It was while he was a student



at UC Berkeley that he met his future wife, Marian H. Ehrich, a fellow undergraduate who studied social welfare. They married in 1939 and remained together until her death in 2005.

Blum went on to earn his M.D. in 1942 from UC San Francisco and a master’s in public health from Harvard University in 1948. Between his advanced degree studies, he worked from 1944 to 1945 as an assistant physician at Johns Hopkins University, and then from 1946 to 1947 as a fellow at Stanford University.

From 1950 to 1966, Blum served as health officer for Contra Costa County, where he helped establish numerous public health programs, including vision screening in schools, community mental health and genetic counseling. While he was a health officer, Blum also served as a lecturer at UC Berkeley’s School of Public Health until 1966, when he joined the faculty as a clinical professor. Two years later, he became a professor of community health planning. In 1970, Blum established the School’s Program in Planning and Policy, chairing the program until his retirement in 1984.

Throughout his career, Blum held teaching appointments at Stanford University’s Medical School as well as at UC Berkeley. In 1991, he

was called back from retirement to serve as interim chair of the UC Berkeley-UCSF Joint Medical Program, a position he held for three years.

He also served as a consultant or member of numerous committees for the National Institutes of Health, American Public Health Association, U.S. Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the World Health Organization. He was vice president of the American Public Health Association in 1990.

Blum was equally active in local and state community health development, serving as president of the California Conference of Local Health Officers and the Northern California Public Health Association. He also served as chairman of the board of trustees of Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, and helped found and chaired the HEALS Corp., a Bay Area health maintenance organization.

In addition to Blum’s numerous research publications, he authored three landmark texts on community health and health planning: *Public Health Administration: A Public Health Viewpoint*, *Health Planning*, and *Planning for Health*.

Among his many awards were the 1985 Sedgwick Memorial Medal, the most prestigious honor of the American Public Health Association; the 1985 Schlesinger Award of the American Health Planning Association; and the 1984 Berkeley Citation. He also received a Fulbright Scholarship to Sweden in 1986, and in 1987, he spent a year at West China University of Medical Sciences in Chengdu, China, as a visiting professor.

He is survived by his nieces, Lynda Brothers and Peggy Brothers Cory.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible gift in Henrik Blum’s memory, mail your check (payable to “UC Regents”) to the attention of Patricia Hosel, Office of External Relations, UC Berkeley School of Public Health, 140 Warren Hall, Berkeley, California, 94720-7360, and include a note that the gift should be directed to the “Henrik L. Blum Fund.”

—Sarah Yang

## In Memoriam

**Paul Palmisano, M.D., M.P.H. '79**, died May 24, 2005, in Dayton, Ohio. Palmisano was a pediatrician and former associate dean and director of student affairs at the University of Alabama, Birmingham, School of Medicine. He was a dedicated teacher and medical student advocate. Previously, Palmisano served as medical officer for the Food Administration and was instrumental in developing a successful poison control center and child safety programs, working for approval of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act. After his retirement from the University of Alabama in 1990, he received the American Academy of Pediatrics Lifetime Achievement Award.



**Mike Pendo, M.P.H. '96**, died suddenly on November 15, 2006 at age 41. At the time of his death,

he was working on completing his doctoral dissertation on "HIV Prevalence and Risk Behavior in a Late-Night Population of Men Who Have Sex with Men." Pendo, who earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at UC Berkeley, was a popular graduate student instructor at the School, earning an Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor award in 2003. In addition, he was a longtime HIV prevention educator and researcher at the San Francisco Department of Public Health's AIDS Office, first joining the department as a volunteer in 1992 and then working part-time while pursuing his public health degrees. "Mike was an amazing human being and a tireless AIDS researcher and community leader. He was much beloved at the San Francisco Department of Public Health and here at the School," said Professor Meredith Minkler, who served as chair of Pendo's dissertation committee. A California native, Pendo is survived by his parents; four sisters; one brother; brothers- and sister-in-law; 12 nieces and nephews; and a goddaughter. The Michael L. Pendo Fellowship is being established at the School to honor his

memory and recognize a Dr.P.H. student each year who embodies his spirit and commitment.

**Alan Akira Watahara, Dr.P.H. '87, M.P.H. '79, J.D.**, died October 29, 2005, at age 52. He was a dedicated advocate for disadvantaged children across California for 30 years. He began his career in the early 1970s in Sacramento as founder and director of the Sacramento Dental Care Foundation, Inc., a public private partnership that offered dental care to underserved communities. In 1983 he clerked for the Honorable Harry W. Low, presiding justice First Appellate District in San Francisco. In 1988, he worked in San Francisco's Youth Guidance Center providing legal counsel for incarcerated youth as a deputy city attorney in San Francisco's City Attorney's office. He went on to found the Children and Youth Policy Project, a statewide advocacy and research organization at UC Berkeley, and began to explore other issues pertaining to children's needs and rights. This project grew into the Sacramento-based California Partnership for Children; for nearly a decade, Watahara was its president and general counsel and held the same positions with the California Children's Lobby. He was most recently a principal in the Watahara Group in Sacramento, providing legal counsel and advice to many nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

He served on many community, regional, state, and national boards of directors. He was most active in San Francisco's Japanese American community, serving on the board of directors of the Japanese Community Youth Council. In addition, he served on the boards of Menlo Park's Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, California Pan Ethnic Health Network in Oakland, and California Tomorrow in Oakland, and was a commissioner for the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and a member of the Committee on Diversity for the California Children and Families Commission. He was the recipient of the 1998 Heroes in Health Care Award from the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation Fellowship.

He earned his master's and doctoral degrees from UC Berkeley and his law degree from Golden Gate University. Watahara is survived by his aunt and many beloved relatives.

**Leland I. White, M.P.H. '70**, died January 4, 2006, at Philadelphia's Thomas Jefferson University Hospital at age 59. White served as chief executive of Main Line Health from 2001 to 2004, when he resigned for health reasons. Main Line Health comprises several suburban health care facilities in Pennsylvania, including Bryn Mawr, Lankenau and Paoli Hospitals. Before becoming Main Line president, White had been president of Paoli Hospital for nine years, served as vice president of Main Line and of Jefferson Health System, and had been hospital director at the former medical College of Pennsylvania. He is survived by his wife, three sons, and a sister. 🍷

## William Oswald, Pioneer in the Use of Algae to Treat Wastewater

**William J. Oswald, Ph.D. '57**, a University of California, Berkeley, professor emeritus of public health and of civil and environmental engineering, and an innovator in algae biotechnology and natural wastewater treatment, died Dec. 8, 2005, at his Concord home at age 86.

Oswald was among the first engineers to study the symbiotic interactions between algae and bacteria in wastewater treatment ponds. In the 1950s Oswald began his research leading to designs of natural treatment systems powered primarily by solar energy, making wastewater treatment more affordable and sustainable. He is credited with developing the Advanced Integrated Wastewater Pond Systems technology in which wastewater passes through a series of ponds to be treated. The process involves the use of algae photosynthesis in “high rate ponds” rather than the electro-mechanical aeration devices used in more expensive, conventional wastewater treatment systems. The algae produce oxygen that allows aerobic bacteria to break down remaining contaminants in the water. The water is then reclaimed through a series of tertiary processes for reuse and recycling in such applications as agricultural irrigation.

The study of such natural systems has developed in recent decades into the field of ecological engineering. Thousands of communities throughout the United States have adopted successful natural wastewater treatment systems, although large urban areas that do not have enough land required for ponds or wetlands still use mechanical systems.

Colleagues pointed out that the needs of the developing world—where many people bathe in and collect drinking water from rivers polluted with raw sewage—motivated Oswald’s research and the development of simple, affordable, and more sustainable wastewater treatment technology that produces renewable energy through methane fermentation and biogas recovery.

“Bill Oswald has contributed to wastewater treatment, and hence to public health, in the less developed world, more than anybody else



I know,” said Gedaliah Shelef, professor emeritus of Israel’s Technion Institute of Technology, an expert on wastewater engineering and a former student of Oswald’s.

Oswald received his B.S. degree in civil engineering in 1950 and his Ph.D. in sanitary engineering, biology, and public health in 1957, all at UC Berkeley. That same year, he joined the UC Berkeley faculty as an assistant professor in biomedical and environmental health sciences at the School of Public Health and in environmental engineering at the College of Engineering. He was also affiliated with the campus’s Energy and Resources Group. Oswald was promoted to associate professor in 1963, and to full professor in 1970. In 2001, Oswald joined Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory’s Earth Sciences Division as a senior staff scientist. He retired from teaching at UC Berkeley in 1990, but he continued his research and engineering practice as a scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory until the last days of his life.

Oswald authored more than 400 works published in academic journals, conference proceedings and books. He won several medals and prizes for his research from the national Water Environment Federation and the American Society for Civil Engineers, and was a fellow in the American Academy

for the Advancement of Science and a diplomate in the American Academy of Environmental Engineering. In 2005, the International Society for Applied Phycology presented him with a lifetime achievement award. Colleagues from around the world have also nominated him for the 2006 Stockholm Water Prize.

He was also president and founding partner of Oswald Green, LLC, an environmental technology company, and of Oswald Engineering Associates, Inc., an engineering services company.

Oswald is survived by his wife Eileen, two sons, eight grandchildren, and a sister. He was predeceased by a son and daughter.

If you wish to make a gift in his memory to the School of Public Health fund, mail your check (payable to the “School of Public Health Fund”) to the attention of Patricia Hosel, Office of External Relations, UC Berkeley School of Public Health, 140 Warren Hall, Berkeley, California, 94720-7360, and include a note that the gift is in memory of William Oswald. [🔗](#)

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