

Alan Laties, Ophthalmology

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Alan Laties

Alan M. Laties, an emeritus professor of ophthalmology in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine, passed away on December 26, 2021. He was 90.

Born in Massachusetts, Dr. Laties graduated from Harvard College in 1954 and Baylor College of Medicine in 1959. Following graduation, he interned at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City and completed his residency in ophthalmology at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. He then served as a postdoctoral fellow in the Institute of Neurological Science before joining Penn's faculty in 1960 in the department of ophthalmology. Eight years later, he was promoted to associate professor. During the late 1960s, Dr. Laties conducted influential research on the distribution of the chemical noradrenaline in the structure of the eye, which helped to diagnose eye abnormalities (*Almanac* December 1968

(<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v15pdf/n04/121668.pdf>). In 1972, he was awarded the Jonas Friedenwald Award for his contributions to visual sciences, and the next year, he served on a Penn committee to select the new Vice Provost for Research. Dr. Laties also served on University Council committees in the early 1970s and throughout his career.

Dr. Laties received Penn's prestigious Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching in 1970 and the National Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation Humanitarian Award in 1978. In the early 1980s, Dr. Laties was named the chair of research at the Schieie Eye Institute, and in 1984, he was awarded the Harold G. Scheie Research Professorship in Ophthalmology at Penn's School of Medicine (*Almanac* February 21, 1984 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v30pdf/n23/022184.pdf>)). Eight years later, he was named the Harold G. Scheie/Nina C. Mackall Research Professor in Ophthalmology. In 1994, he won the Paul Kayser International Award of Merit in Retina Research of the International Congress of Eye Research, which recognized his influential advances in the localization of neuropeptides in the retina. Beginning in 2004, Dr. Laties sat for several years on the board of Penn's University Club. In 2020, Dr. Laties retired, taking emeritus status.

Outside of his academic duties, Dr. Laties served as editor-in-chief of *Investigative Ophthalmologist* and *Visual Science* and chaired the Scientific Advisory Board of the National Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation-Fighting Blindness. He focused his research on the hereditary disease retinitis pigmentosa and made many advances in diagnosis and treatment of this disorder and other afflictions of the eye, like diabetes and glaucoma; he published this research widely in scientific journals. In the early 1980s, he was part of a two-physician team sent to the USSR by the U.S. government to evaluate a proposed treatment of retinitis pigmentosa.

Dr. Laties is survived by his wife, Deena Gu, a distinguished artist; children, Jane, Alex, and Nicholas Robinson; and a brother, David.
