

Frank Welsh, Neurosurgery

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DEATHS

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Frank Welsh

Frank Alexander Welsh III, an emeritus professor of biochemistry in the Perelman School of Medicine's department of neurosurgery, died on April 2. He was 77.

Born in Evanston, Illinois, Dr. Welsh earned a BS in chemistry from Stanford University in 1965 and a PhD in pharmacology from Washington University in 1970. Afterwards, he completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Duke University. He joined Penn's faculty in 1973 in the School of Medicine's department of neurosurgery. In addition to this appointment, he also taught biochemistry to first-year medical students. During his time at Penn, Dr. Welsh was active in the school's academic community, conducting research that won a University Research Foundation grant in 1990 and serving on Faculty Senate committees.

Dr. Welsh conducted celebrated scientific research at Penn, focusing on strokes and cerebral blood flow, and he published more than 80 peer-reviewed articles. Dr. Welsh's published research includes his collaboration with adjunct associate professor of neurosurgery Katalin Kariko and her now-famous studies of messenger RNA. This work was a major keystone in the development of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines now being used to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2012, Dr. Welsh retired from Penn, taking emeritus status.

Outside of academic, Dr. Welsh enjoyed yearly trips to Yosemite National Park and around the world. He coached little league baseball teams, played the game himself with a minor-league team, and was an aficionado of a baseball board game called APBA. He also worked with children and youth as a leader in local Boy Scout groups, as an advisor at the Main Line Unitarian Church, and as a leader in a local Sierra Club program that helped city youth from Philadelphia explore nearby parklands.

Dr. Welsh is survived by his wife Barbara, his sons Edward and Frank Alexander IV, daughter-in-law Bessie, son-in-law Jon, four grandchildren, and other relatives. A service will be planned for a later date. In lieu of flowers, family and friends are invited to contribute to the nature group of their choice.