

Jorge Ferrer, Penn Vet

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Jorge F. Ferrer, an emeritus professor of microbiology at Penn Vet, died on August 5. He was 91.

Born in Argentina, Dr. Ferrer earned a BA from Colegio Nacional de Monserrat in Cordoba in 1950. He then obtained a medical degree from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Buenos Aires in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1957. From 1957 to 1959, he was a postdoctoral fellow in the Instituto de Cultura Hispanica in Madrid. In 1960, he became the director of curriculum at the School of Medicine in Cordoba, Argentina, and spent 1961-1963 pursuing a research fellowship in the Institute of Hematological Research at the National Academy of Medicine in Buenos Aires before coming to the U.S. in 1964.

In 1964, Dr. Ferrer took a cancer researcher position at the Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo, New York. A year later, funded by an Eleanor Roosevelt Fellowship, he moved to Stanford University in Palo Alto. He joined Penn's faculty in 1969 as an associate professor of pathobiology in the New Bolton Center of the School of Veterinary Medicine. In 1972, he became an associate professor of microbiology at Penn Vet's New Bolton Center, where he became a full professor of clinical studies in 1975.

In 1977, he became the director of Penn's Comparative Leukemia Studies Unit. Dr. Ferrer's work during the 1970s and 1980s in the viral oncology section of the leukemia unit provided a number of breakthroughs concerning the etiology and pathogenesis of bovine leukemia and dispelled false notions about the disease that had persisted for decades. His more than 130 peer-reviewed papers from this era were widely read and cited.

During the 1990s, Dr. Ferrer's research into the effects of virus HTLV-1 on a group of lambs was investigated for failing to meet safety guidelines (*Almanac* July 17, 1990 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v37pdf/n01/071790.pdf>)). Committee findings resulted in sanctions being imposed (*Almanac* February 19, 1991 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v37pdf/n22/021991.pdf>)). Dr. Ferrer filed a lawsuit against the University in 1992. After a verdict (*Almanac* March 2, 1999 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v45/n23/appeal.html>))) and multiple appeals, Dr. Ferrer was awarded \$2.9 million in 2003 after a ruling by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

He retired from Penn in 2010 and became an emeritus professor.