

Robert Roy MacGregor, Medicine

MAY 31, 2022 | **VOL 68 ISSUE 36 ([HTTPS://ALMANAC.UPENN.EDU/VOLUME-68-NUMBER-36](https://almanac.upenn.edu/volume-68-number-36))** | **DEATHS** | **PRINT**

Robert Roy MacGregor, an emeritus professor of medicine in the Perelman School of Medicine, passed away on May 12. He was 84.

Dr. MacGregor received an AB from Princeton in 1960 and an MD from Harvard four years later. He completed a residency in internal medicine at Boston City Hospital and a fellowship in infectious diseases at University of Washington, Seattle. He then worked at the Laboratory of Clinical Investigation at NIH, where he made the acquaintance of Richard Root. In 1971, Dr. Root was recruited to Penn, where he launched its infectious diseases department, and he brought Dr. MacGregor with him. Dr. MacGregor came to Penn in 1971 as an assistant professor of medicine; five years later, he was promoted to an associate professor.

In 1975, Dr. Root left Penn for Yale, and Dr. MacGregor was asked to be interim chief of infectious diseases. He eventually served until 1990 and led the department admirably. As Dr. MacGregor's colleague Harvey Friedman, professor of medicine, wrote, "he gave his heart and soul to help the new infectious diseases division thrive. He recruited some of our most successful faculty and fellows and set the tone that established the collegial atmosphere in the infectious diseases division that remains today. I think his most important contribution to Penn was his determination and dedication to provide care to the underserved and less privileged." He launched the Infectious Diseases Management Conference, still a popular annual event in the department. In 1986, Dr. MacGregor became a full professor. He was also active elsewhere at Penn—throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Dr. MacGregor served on committees of the Faculty Senate and University Council, as well as several special task forces.

Dr. MacGregor launched Penn's HIV clinical program in 1988, despite many early stigmas and uncertainties surrounding the virus. Under the auspices of this program, Dr. MacGregor made cutting-edge scientific innovations. In 1994, he contributed to the discovery of the vpr gene, which regulates latency in HIV and can be targeted by drugs. Two years later, he contributed to the development of the one of the earliest HIV vaccines. In the early 1990s, he also served on Penn's HIV/AIDS Task Force, helping communicate to the Penn community the variety of mitigation, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment strategies available. In 2005, he was awarded a Red Ribbon by the Community Advisory Board of Penn's Center for AIDS Research in honor of his contributions to the fight against AIDS.

In 2005, Dr. MacGregor retired and took emeritus status. In retirement, he served as one of the founding executive committee members (and later, a president) of the Penn Association of Senior and Emeritus Faculty. In May 2006, the infectious diseases' outpatient clinic that Dr. MacGregor had helped found was renamed the MacGregor Infectious Diseases Clinic in his honor. Dr. MacGregor continued to be active at Penn during his retirement, launching a service in 2011 in which retired medical faculty visited HUP patients to explain confusing medical terminology.

"Rob epitomized compassion as a provider," said Dr. Friedman. "He had a huge heart and his patients loved him for it. He was a very skilled provider with great judgment and common sense. He was the ultimate patient advocate."

Dr. MacGregor is survived by his wife of 58 years, Peggy MacGregor; and his children, Laurie, Matthew, and Sarah.