Pharmacists mourn passing of University of Utah’s Arthur Lipman, 72

Arthur George Lipman, longtime director of clinical pharmacology at the University of Utah’s Pain Management Center, died of myelofibrosis on April 23 at the age of 72.

Lipman was a respected clinician and a widely published author and speaker on the subject of pain management. He served as editor of several academic publications, including the *Journal of Pain & Palliative Care Pharmacotherapy* and the Cochrane Collaboration's pain, palliative, and supportive care review group.

“Art's passion for advancing patient care and pharmacy practice over the course of a long and illustrious career is inspirational,” said ASHP Chief Executive Officer Paul W. Abramowitz. “Dr. Lipman's work improved the lives of patients, pharmacists, students, and many others. He will be truly missed, but his life's work will live on in all those he trained, mentored, and worked with.”

Lipman’s editorial and research expertise were recognized in 1999 by the ASHP Research and Education Foundation, which honored him with that year’s Award for Sustained Contributions to the Literature of Pharmacy. He was also the 1980 recipient of the Foundation’s Award for Achievement in Professional Practice.

But his presence as a mentor, a role model, and an advocate for his profession, his patients, and life in general are what Lipman’s colleagues say they most miss since his death.

“He had a passion for what he did, particularly as it related to treating patients, and particularly patients with pain,” said Gary Oderda, professor emeritus at the University of Utah College of Pharmacy in Salt Lake City and Lipman's successor as chair of the department of pharmacy practice.

Oderda said Lipman was part of the team that validated the Treatment Outcomes in Pain Survey, a quality-of-life assessment instrument for pain management in multidisciplinary settings.

“Art was really trying to make sure that patients didn’t need to suffer from pain unnecessarily. That sort of drove him,” Oderda said.

Diana Brixner, executive director of the university’s Pharmacotherapy Outcomes Research Center, met Lipman in 2002 and found him to be warm-hearted and dedicated to excellence in the teaching, research, and practice of pharmacy.

“He convinced me early on that the name of our department needed to change from ‘Pharmacy Practice’ to ‘Pharmacotherapy’ to better reflect our broader role in pharmacy,” Brixner recalled. “This was just one of many examples of his vision to the future of pharmacy and how we each, individually, need to take responsibility for the success of that vision.”

“He was a wonderful friend and colleague and will be deeply missed by our department and profession,” she said.

Laura Shane-McWhorter, clinical professor of pharmacotherapy at the university, said Lipman's drive and passion influenced her career, starting from when she was one of his students.

“Art always taught us how important it was to really challenge ourselves and to go beyond our comfort level,” she said. “He had a wonderful intellectual curiosity, and he just was full of life—and really larger than life—and he was professionally and personally exuberant.”

Lipman was born August 4, 1944, in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and received his Pharm.D. degree from the University of Michigan in 1968.

After graduation, he received a commission in the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS). He served 2 years as deputy chief at the Indian Health Service (IHS) hospital in Tuba City, Arizona, and became a reservist at the end of his active tour.

During one PHS reactivation, Lipman chaired a committee to develop IHS pharmacy standards of practice. He was awarded the Surgeon General’s certificate of appreciation in 2011 for his contributions to public health.

Lipman joined the staff of Yale–New Haven Hospital in Connecticut in 1970, working first as director of drug information and, 3 years later, as associate director of pharmacy services.

But most of Lipman's career was spent at the University of Utah, which he joined in 1977 to help transform the pharmacy services.

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He really built the department and built the clinical pharmacy program here,” Oderda said.

Linda Tyler, chief pharmacy officer at the University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics and a former student of Lipman's, said he essentially launched her own career as a pharmacist.

Tyler said Lipman urged her, as a new graduate, to complete a residency program. She said Lipman rightly described the residency, which later opened many professional doors for her, as “the most incredible experience you’ll ever do.”

During their decades together at the university, Tyler said, Lipman never lost sight of his roots in drug information. She fondly recalled his tenure on the pharmacy and therapeutics committee, where his critical-thinking
skills often drove the group’s discussions. “He would bring up the tough questions,” Tyler recalled. “He was so effective about asking the right questions…and making sure that we had a really strong medication-use system and formulary.”

Oderda fondly recalled his friend’s tenacity when he wanted to get something done. “‘No’ was not in Art’s vocabulary,” he said.

Lipman was active in nonpharmacy professional associations such as the American Pain Society and the American Cancer Society and also served the community through his work with state and local hospice organizations.

He served throughout his career on several ASHP committees and councils, including 2 years as chair of the Council on Therapeutics. He was elected to ASHP’s Board of Directors in 1982 and became an ASHP Fellow in 1996.

Lipman had a lifelong dedication to the Boy Scouts of America, serving as scoutmaster of troops in Arizona and Utah and holding many service positions with the organization over a span of more than 50 years.

He is survived by his son Joshua Lipman, daughter Sarah Mulhern, granddaughter Eliana Mulhern-Friedman, and sister Joan Florsheim.

—Kate Traynor  
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