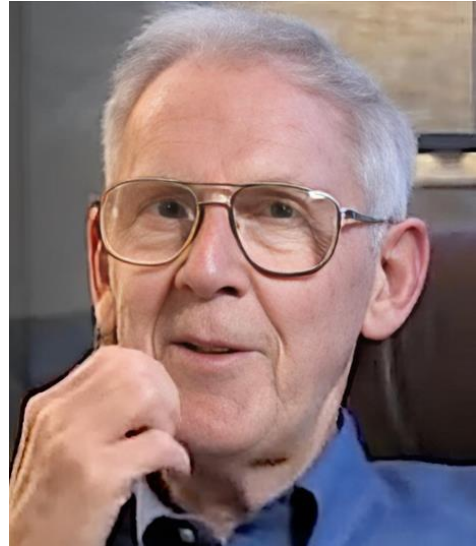


In Memoriam

Richard D. Brunning MD, Past-President of Society for Hematopathology, passed away at his home on December 9, 2024 at the age of 92. Dr. Brunning was a charter member of the Society and served as the 4th President from 1988 to 1990. He was Director of Hematopathology in the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology at the University of Minnesota for 33 years and Professor Emeritus upon retirement.



Dick was born and raised in Grand Forks, North Dakota, earned his undergraduate degree from the University of North Dakota and his Medical Degree from McGill University in Montreal. After completing a rotating internship at Ancker City and County Hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota he trained in Pathology at the University of Minnesota where he spent the entirety of his long and illustrious career. An endowed Brunning Professorship was established by the University upon his retirement.

Dick was a lifelong student of medicine blessed with a superior intellect and analytical mind. He was an exceptionally accomplished academic hematopathologist and internationally recognized as a leader in the profession for over four decades. His diagnostic skills were recognized at an early stage of his career and he quickly became a national consultant for challenging cases. His major area of scholarship was in bone marrow pathology where he made numerous original contributions to the literature leading to improved diagnosis and classification of myeloid and lymphoid neoplasms and other hematologic disorders. He was an early leader in the practice of a complete bone marrow examination by performing and interpreting blood, aspirate and trephine biopsy sections together in all cases. He was, also, quick to apply emerging technologies including immunophenotyping and genetic analysis to morphologic findings. This practice led to his original characterization of many bone marrow disorders including blood and marrow characteristics of involvement by lymphoma, Ph+ ALL, acute monoblastic leukemia, LGL leukemia and virus associated hemophagocytic syndrome.

Although Dick spent a great deal of time at the microscope, he was always directly focused on the patient. He spent considerable time speaking with the clinical team and would not hesitate to leave his office to view the patient's chart, talk to the patient or assist with a bone marrow biopsy. He often re-examined cases he remembered years after he had initially seen them to see if there was anything more that he could add or importantly anything he could learn.

He became the most impactful national and international academic leader in bone marrow pathology for the last quarter of the 20th century. In the broader pathology community he was perhaps best known for his authorship of the 3rd series edition of the AFIP Fascicle on Tumors of the Bone Marrow and his long term as Director of the annual Tutorial on Hematopathology.

Of all of his professional accomplishments, Dr. Brunning's major legacy will be his gift as a teacher and mentor. He trained hundreds of residents and fellows in hematopathology. Through his mentorship he significantly elevated the practice of bone marrow pathology. Many of his former students have themselves gone on to become leaders in the field and directors of major programs across the country and beyond. Literally thousands of patients have unknowingly been positively impacted by his life and many contributions to our field of medical practice.

Hematopathology was not Dick's only interest. He was an avid reader highly versed on politics and national and international affairs. He was an engaging and energetic conversationalist. He loved opera and symphony and visibly supported the arts in Minnesota.

The hematopathology community has lost a giant in the field. Those of us fortunate enough to have had Dr. Brunning as a teacher, mentor and friend will miss and forever be indebted to him.

Rob McKenna, M.D., Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota

LoAnn Peterson, M.D., Professor Emerita, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL