

Memoriam in Honor of Alan Schneyer  
by Dr Joe Jerry

Alan Schneyer was a vital part of the community at Baystate Medical Center, and therefore, his death on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 has impacted many of us. He was a researcher, a teacher, an entrepreneur and, most valued, he was a friend and colleague to many of us. Alan was a frequent guest for Grand Rounds in the Division of Endocrinology at Baystate Medical Center, invited lecturer at UMass Amherst and a guest lecturer in courses. He was a collaborator in science locally as well as nationally and internationally. Alan's obituary can be found at <https://www.deefuneralhome.com/obituaries/Alan-L-Schneyer?obId=19008573>. His life is a reminder of what we have all lost, and especially his wife, Elissa Brown, and children, Jon and Becca.

A Life in Science

After more than 20 years as a researcher at Massachusetts General Hospital in Reproductive Endocrinology, Alan was recruited to join the Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute in 2007. Alan was a fixture in the research community of Western Massachusetts with faculty appointments at both Baystate Medical Center and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. The move to western Massachusetts was stimulated by his creation of a mouse model for polycystic ovarian disease. But his work demonstrated unexpected effects of follistatin-like proteins on the function of pancreatic beta cells and their role in diabetes. This result caused him to shift the focus of his research to diabetes. He could see the potential for a completely new strategy to manage diabetes. This was to devise therapeutics to restore the function of the pancreatic beta cells rather than simply provide insulin by daily injections to patients. A grand idea, but he was unwilling to be satisfied with simply an idea and he committed himself to the task of building this new therapy.

To support new innovations in diabetes care, Alan obtained grants from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the National Institutes of Health supporting his work. But to drive this work forward to a viable therapeutic would require a more focused approach. Therefore, in 2014 he started Fairbanks Pharmaceuticals, Inc. The company was awarded a patent for their therapeutic just weeks ago. Fairbanks continues with this work and will provide a legacy that most of us aspire to. Some of Alan's posts can be found at the company's website (<https://fairbankspharma.com/author/aschneyer/>).

A Friend and Colleague

We remember Alan as the indomitable optimist, an individual who could see opportunities as well as the hurdles. He provided support for those around him. He was recognized for his patience as a teacher. The success of his students and staff reflect his ability to both communicate and stimulate a passion for research. For us, Alan represented the best of science and the effort to use science to improve the lives of people. That included the joy of discovery, the challenge of wrestling with technical problems as well as developing new therapies and the relentless desire to never give up on a dream. Throughout all of this, his compassion was ever-present. He also brought

joy when we talked about cycling, watching an ultimate tournament or discussing a weekend with his family. Alan was much more than a colleague. Though he is sorely missed, Alan leaves us with many more joys for having known and worked with him.