

This past March, the nutrition community lost another member of the generation of researchers who identified the essential nutrients and elucidated their mechanisms of action: Stanley Norton Gershoff. This sobering observation serves as a stark reminder of how young the field of nutrition science is compared with our sister disciplines, biochemistry and physiology.

Gershoff was born in 1924 and raised in New York City. He was the son of a Russian immigrant father and a native New York mother. Precocious at an early age, he graduated from high school at 14 y of age and then attended the University of Wisconsin. Gershoff completed his BA degree in zoology in 1943. Not yet 20 y old, he was drafted into the US Army, where he served with distinction as a sergeant in the Pacific Theater during World War II, part of the time as a medic. Although he must have had some harrowing experiences as well, true to Stan Gershoff's nature and wry sense of the absurd, 70 y later he could recount some of the mishaps he suffered with humor and perhaps a bit of embellishment.

After the war ended, Gershoff returned to the University of Wisconsin and completed both MS and PhD degrees in biochemistry. From there, he joined the still nascent Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health (now the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health), where he spent 24 y conducting research on a wide range of topics, including B vitamins, amino acids, vitamins A and D, and the minerals calcium, zinc, and magnesium in a variety of species.

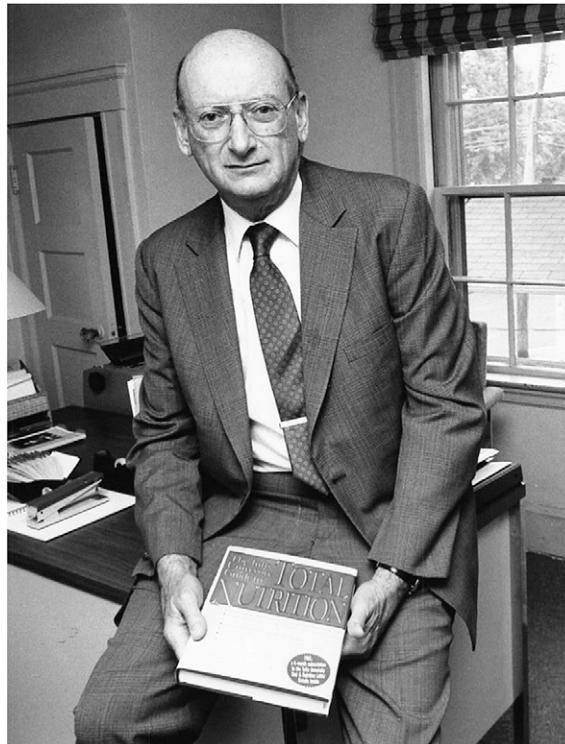
Some of the work that Gershoff was proudest of was tangential to his laboratory-based research. If an opportunity presented itself and he thought he could make a difference, he was never hesitant to lend a helping hand. One of his most impressive accomplishments was his work in Thailand from 1971 to 1975 with the Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition and National Defense of the US government where, in addition to completing a research study on the value of enriching rice fed to children with amino acids and vitamins, he established programs to build daycare centers for children and to train women living in rural villages to become health care workers. In the following years, the Thailand Ministry of Health expanded the program to include >10,200 village daycare centers and has trained >750,000 women as health care workers.

From 1967 to 1968, Gershoff was part of a board of inquiry into hunger and malnutrition in the United States, which issued the report *Hunger USA*. He served as a scientific consultant to the White House, the USDA, UNICEF, and many other governmental and nongovernmental agencies. In 1969, he chaired a panel at the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health and in 1981 was the Nutrition Consultant for the White House Conference on Aging.

Gershoff's laboratory at Harvard adjoined that of Jean Mayer's. In 1977, soon after Mayer became president of Tufts University, he quickly tapped Gershoff to create the Tufts Nutrition Institute. Four years later, the institute was transformed into the Tufts University School of Nutrition (now the Gerald J and Dorothy F Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy), with Gershoff as the founding dean. He served in this position until 1996. After his retirement, in honor of the outstanding contributions he made to the field of nutrition and Tufts University, the Stanley N Gershoff Chair in Nutrition Science and Policy was established, as were the Gershoff Graduate Student Scholarships and the annual Gershoff Symposium. His vision for the school was to span the entire domain of nutrition, from basic science to policy. The current school reflects that vision to this day.

In addition to serving as the school's founding dean, Gershoff worked diligently with Mayer to secure funding for the construction of the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (later renamed the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging) on the Tufts Health Sciences campus. The same year, Gershoff started what would become the Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter (originally the Tufts Diet and Nutrition Letter), which he edited until 2000. With his colleagues at the newsletter, he wrote the *Tufts University Guide to Total Nutrition* in 1990. The book went on to win the American Medical Writer's Award.

Gershoff belonged to a number of professional societies and received numerous awards honoring his work. In 1997, he was



Stanley Norton Gershoff, PhD
1924–2017

(Photo by Mark Morelli for Tufts University.)

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the recipient of the American Society for Nutrition's Elvehjem Award for distinguished services to the public through the science of nutrition. More recently, Gershoff was elected to the prestigious European Academy of Science and Art.

After retiring and relocating to Davis, California, Gershoff served as an ombudsman for persons in long-term care facilities. But he would return to Tufts every year for the Gershoff Symposium. Yet, his most rewarding job did not happen until later in life. At age 70, Gershoff and his wife, Marilyn Crim, adopted a daughter, Carrie, who was born in 1995 and he became a stay-at-home dad. This past year, Gershoff proudly watched his daughter graduate from Tufts University with a degree in English.

Gershoff will be remembered by many people around the world as an outstanding nutritionist and scientist, an inspirational leader in his field, and a dedicated dean and teacher to the many students, faculty, and staff who crossed his path. He will also be remembered for his boundless warmth, his love and loyalty to his friends, his incredible storytelling, and his irreverent sense of humor.

On a personal level, I was fortunate to be appointed the first Stanley N Gershoff Professor of Nutrition Science and Policy at the Friedman School. But more importantly, I had the opportunity

to spend a considerable amount of time with Gershoff and his family at their beloved home on Cape Cod. We talked, ate, laughed, reminisced, speculated about the future, mused about bringing up children, and spent time on the lake. One year, Gershoff decided he was going to teach me how to fish. His policy was catch and release. I managed the catch part; however, I was a bit squeamish about the release. He gamely helped with the latter, but in a good-humored way never let me forget my shortcoming. Most important, I was the benefactor of Gershoff's wisdom, generosity, and wit. For all of us who knew Stan well that is what we will miss the most.

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