

Passed by the IUPUI Faculty Council at their meeting on May 5, 2009.

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION  
ON BEHALF OF**

**DR. JOHN SCHMEDTJE  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

Dr. John Schmedtje died on Friday morning, March 20, at the age of 89. John spent more than 25 years in the Department of Anatomy at Indiana University School of Medicine, teaching the fundamentals of Microscopic Anatomy to medical and dental students. He was first appointed in 1966 as an Associate Professor, and retired with emeritus status in 1991. He continued to teach for another year following his official retirement, an indication of his dedication to his students and to their education.

John was born in St. Louis in 1919. He received his A.B degree in Chemistry in 1941 from Columbia University. Of course, this was at the beginning of World War II, and so he spent four years in the United States Army (1942-1946), achieving the rank of Lieutenant. Following his discharge, he spent the next year working as a civilian biochemist in the War Department. He subsequently entered Rutgers University and received his Ph.D. in Zoology and Immunology in 1951. He was appointed as Instructor in Anatomy at St. Louis University in 1951, and promoted to Assistant Professor in 1953. He accepted a position as Instructor in Anatomy at Harvard Medical School (1956-1958) and then was appointed as Assistant Professor at Tufts University in 1958.

While in St. Louis, John met his wife Winifred, who was working as a Medical Sociologist. They married in 1956 and had three children. Two of his children also went into medically-related fields, with his son John becoming a cardiologist and daughter Diane completing Nursing School at Purdue University.

John's research interests centered around the cells and tissues of the immune system, and he used the then novel techniques of electron microscopy, together with histochemical and fluorescent-labeled antibodies to study the immune system. He had particular interests in the immune reactions that cause eye pathology such as glaucoma, and was funded for seven years through a grant from the US Public Health Service to study immune reactions in sympathetic ophthalmia and uveitis. He also investigated fore-shortened lactation and autoimmune reactions as a possible cause of breast cancer.

But John's greatest contributions at Indiana University were in the field of education, where he made major contributions to medical, dental and graduate teaching in Histology. For several years in the 1970's, he received the highest teacher ratings in medical histology from the first year students. At the time of his retirement, he was the Director of the first year Medical Histology course. A former colleague said of him: "As course Director Dr. Schmedtje's contributions have been instrumental in the total development of the Dental and Medical Histology courses." John was also active in graduate education, and chaired the

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Graduate Committee in the Department of Anatomy for nine years. He used his combined interests in histology and immunology to develop a new graduate course in the Histology of the Immune System, and taught this for years. A former student of his said "As a teacher, he has always exhibited not only a thorough knowledge of the material, but more important, a patient and understanding attitude toward students. This attitude, I believe, is engendered by his true interest in the student's welfare."

John had a very positive impact on our students. Not only was he masterful in helping our students appreciate the myriad correlations between structure and function at the cellular and tissue levels, he made the subject of microanatomy colorful and fascinating. John was an engaging teacher particularly in the laboratory setting where he used anecdotes from his broad experience as a cell biologist to capture the imagination and drive home the lesson of the day. When we encounter Medical School alumni from the "Schmedtje era," we are always impressed that they remember John with both fondness and respect.

Dr. Schmedtje was a member of numerous scientific organizations, including the American Association of Anatomists, the American Society for Cell Biology, The Histochemical Society, the Electron Microscopic Society of America, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Sigma Xi.

Although many of John's colleagues are now gone, those of us who knew him found him to be a gentle and kind man. Even up until his death, he conducted himself with a sense of quiet dignity that was respectful of others. He had the best interests of his students always in mind, and worked to provide them with the best education he could. We appreciate his contributions to the School and the University, and he will certainly be remembered by his students.

Be it here resolved that this Memorial Resolution be adopted by the Faculty Council of Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, and that a copy be sent to his wife, Mrs. Winifred Schmedtje.

Prepared by:  
David B. Burr, PhD  
James McAteer, PhD  
Feng Zhou, PhD