



Emilio Weiss, Microbiologist at the Naval Medical Research Institute (NMRI) in Bethesda, MD for more than 30 years, died May 30, 2008 at the age of 89. Born in Pakrac, Yugoslavia, on October 4, 1918, he spent the early part of his life in Trieste, Italy. His parents, Vanda and Edoardo Weiss both received M.D. degrees from the University of Vienna; his father was a student of Freud and founded the Italian Psychoanalytic Society in Trieste; his mother, the second woman to receive an M.D. from the University of Vienna, was a pediatrician. The family emigrated to the United States in 1939 and Emilio became an American citizen and married Hilda R. Damick in 1943.

His undergraduate education began at the University of Rome and was completed at the University of Kansas with an A.B. in zoology in 1941. His graduate education in microbiology and parasitology took place at the University of Chicago where he completed his M.S. in 1942 and then his Ph.D. in 1948, following an interruption of four years of service with the U.S. Army as a laboratory technician both in the USA and overseas.

After teaching three years as an assistant professor of Bacteriology at Indiana University in Bloomington, he began 34 years of federal service as Branch Chief of the Virus and Rickettsial Division of the Chemical Corps Biological Laboratories at Camp Detrick. He then joined NMRI in Bethesda MD in 1954, serving successively as Assistant Head of the Virology Division, Deputy Director of the Department of Microbiology, Chairman of the Department of Microbiology, and finally as the first holder of the Chair of Science. He retired from government service in 1986 and was awarded the Department of the Navy Superior Civilian Service Award and NMRI Award for Distinguished Service, but he continued to serve as Visiting Scientist at NMRI and review and write scientific articles until 1998.

Dr. Emilio Weiss was one of the founders of the American Society of Rickettsiology and served as its second president 1980-1982. He also served as program chair of the division of Medical Microbiology of the American Society for Microbiology in 1977 and presented its first divisional lecture in 1978. He was frequently invited as a lecturer at universities and commonly gave keynote lectures at national and international scientific meetings. He contributed more than 130 publications with primary emphasis on bacteria of medical importance in the genus *Rickettsia* but he also made significant contributions to the study of *Chlamydia*, *Francisella*, *Neisseria*, *Bartonella*, *Pseudomonas*, *Campylobacter* and *Legionella*. He served as a much-loved postdoctoral mentor to both civilian and Navy Medical Service Core Officers who treasured his modest and often anonymous assistance in co-writing and editing many of their initial scientific publications. He also reviewed National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Army research grants and frequently served as a reviewer and editor for scientific journals and books.

Dr. Weiss was an influential and creative scientist in developing new tools for studying the physiology, biochemistry, and genetics of fastidious and intracellular bacteria. He pioneered the use of a new purification method for intracellular bacteria that is the standard method today. He also coauthored important early publications on the use of DNA in microbial taxonomy, hyperbaric microbiology, subunit vaccines for several agents, and the use of invertebrate cell culture systems for studying vector-borne pathogens. During his career, he was the foremost international expert on the taxonomy and biochemistry of Rickettsiales and the history of rickettsiology.

In 1998, following the double traumas of a serious heart attack and the death of his wife, Dr. Emilio Weiss moved to the Bermuda Village Retirement Center in Advance, NC where he could be near some of his family members. His apartment was well decorated with paintings and drawings that his wife had created during their 55 years of marriage. During his 10 years in North Carolina, he enjoyed the comforts of southern hospitality and maintained his cheerful, loving, and caring personality even when his health declined.

Dr. Emilio Weiss is survived by his brother Guido Weiss of St. Louis, Missouri, his sister Marianna S. Weiss of Eugene, Oregon, his daughter Natalie A. W. Holzwarth of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, his daughter Elizabeth R. Weiss of Urbana, Illinois and also by two grandchildren.