



*Department of Biochemistry and Cell Biology*



The Department of Biochemistry and Cell Biology mourns the passing of our friend and colleague William (Bill) Lennarz on October 27, 2021.

Bill received his Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Illinois and conducted his postdoctoral work with Nobel laureate Konrad Bloch at Harvard before starting his own laboratory at Johns Hopkins University in 1968. In 1983, he moved to the MD Anderson Cancer Center as Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry. He was subsequently recruited to Stony Brook in 1989 as Chairman of the newly renamed Department of Biochemistry and Cell Biology, a position in which he served until 2007. Bill retired from Stony Brook in 2009.

Bill was a major figure in the field of glycobiology. In a series of studies throughout the 1970s his laboratory deciphered the biochemical pathway by which sugars chains are synthesized and then transferred to proteins within the secretory pathway in the cell. In later years, his laboratory made major contributions in many different areas including understanding the enzyme that catalyzes this sugar transfer and identifying an enzyme responsible for removal of these sugars. In recognition of these contributions, in the same year he came to Stony Brook, Bill was elected as a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

Bill's impact on both the Department and the University was as significant as his scientific contributions and continues to be felt in many ways, large and small. During his tenure as Chairman, Bill recruited 16 faculty members and fostered the collegial and collaborative ethos that remains the hallmark of the Department. He was instrumental in creating the interdepartmental Molecular and Cellular Biology graduate program, which has become the largest Life Sciences doctoral program on campus. He also played an important role in planning the buildings that became the Centers for Molecular Medicine and Biology Learning Laboratories. Bill created a lasting legacy at Stony Brook and beyond. He will be dearly missed.