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1560 Sherman Avenue Evanston, IL 60201-4808
Voice: (847) 328-2256 Fax: (847) 328-0509
dfgen@dermatologyfoundation.org
www.dermatologyfoundation.org

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**For More Information
Contact:
Chris Boris
Publications Manager**

Irwin M. Braverman, M.D., Honored by Dermatology Foundation with Lifetime Career Educator Award

The Dermatology Foundation recognized the tremendous contribution Irwin M. Braverman, M.D. has made to the specialty of dermatology by honoring him with the Lifetime Career Educator Award at its recent annual membership meeting. The award celebrates Dr. Braverman's distinguished career and the high standard he has set for the next generation of teachers in all areas of dermatology.

The award was presented by Richard L. Edelson, M.D., Chairman of the Yale Department of Dermatology and Director of the Yale Cancer Center. Of Dr. Braverman he said, "He has shaped the careers and enhanced the clinical and correlative skills of many of our leading dermatologists. The course he teaches in the art museum for medical students is one of our school's most popular, and has been a transforming experience in their evolution to superb clinicians in all specialties."

Known by many as the father of modern consultative dermatology, Dr. Irwin Braverman, professor of dermatology at the Yale University School of Medicine, has been an inspirational teacher to countless leaders in the specialty. Born to Russian immigrant parents, Dr.

Braverman's intelligence and hard work won him a place at the legendary Boston Latin School, followed by matriculation at Harvard College, where he was graduated Summa Cum Laude and elected to Phi Beta Kappa. His medical training and internship took place at Yale University, where his advisor, the famed neuropathologist Elias Maueididis called Braverman "the best student I ever had."

Not only an excellent student, Dr. Braverman was also a born teacher. In 1970, he wrote the classic text, *Skin Signs of Systemic Disease*. Of the third edition, the *New England Journal of Medicine* wrote, "Reading this book is much like sitting at the feet of a learned and experienced professor...in this case a careful observer who has seen a remarkable variety of disease and who has considerable insight to impart....This splendid, readable book deservedly remains a standard work in medical dermatology." Dr. Braverman simply says that the book was written to teach "what I have done for my entire career—to diagnose systemic diseases by carefully looking at the skin."

Carefully looking is at the heart of what Dr. Braverman teaches medical students and residents. In a revolutionary course he developed, he uses paintings in the Yale Center for British Art to teach his students the skills of close observation and pattern recognition as a means of sharpening their diagnostic ability.

Realizing that he had somehow mastered this skill himself, Dr. Braverman sensed that the key to helping students develop it was training them how to scrutinize unfamiliar, and thus preconception-free subjects. Paintings, he concluded, would be ideal.

"The clinical eye is closely related to the artistic eye," Dr. Braverman notes. He instructs his students to "consider your patient in a frame, all attention focused on the person, without external distraction." A controlled trial of a single two-hour training session showed a 10-percent improvement in students' diagnostic capabilities; the class has become a model for other medical schools.

The Dermatology Foundation was created in 1964 and is the leading private funding source for skin disease research. It provides funding that helps develop and retain tomorrow's teachers and researchers in dermatology and enables advancements in patient care.