



William F. Scherer  
(1925-1982)

William F. Scherer, 1981 President of ASTMH, was known for his research productivity. He was a pioneer in the field of tissue culture and growth of polio and many other viruses *in vitro*. He made now classic studies of the epidemiology of Japanese encephalitis in Japan and was a leader in research on Venezuelan encephalitis virus.

Dr. Scherer received his MD from the University of Rochester and had internships in Internal Medicine at Barnes Hospital, Washington University and in Pathology at the Strong Memorial Hospital, University of Rochester. He was an Assistant Resident in Internal Medicine at Vanderbilt University Hospital from 1949-50. He was on the faculty of the University of Minnesota Medical School, first as a National Resource Council Fellow in Virology, reaching the rank of full Professor from 1959-62. In 1962, Dr. Scherer became Professor and Chairman of the Department of Microbiology at Cornell University Medical College.

Dr. Scherer's early work pioneered the propagation of polio poliovirus in human HeLa cancer cells, and later other viruses in tissue culture systems; his studies with Ed Buescher on the ecology of Japanese encephalitis virus set new standards in field/laboratory research. In 1963 he and his coworkers isolated Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus (VEEV) in Mexico concurrently with the isolation by CDC researchers of Everglades virus in Florida; Bill also serendipitously discovered, and then refined the use of hamsters as sentinels and in the laboratory and in the field, which revolutionized VEEV field research. His subsequent studies elucidated the ecology of the enzootic strain and mapped its range in northern Middle America. Field work in Mexico and Guatemala from 1963-1968 provided a baseline for comparisons of the epidemiology and range expansion of the explosive 1969 epizootic of VEEV that reached Texas in 1971. Field research in Middle America from 1970-80 sought to determine whether the epizootic strain had become established in enzootic foci and if not, why. His discovery with co-worker Eddie Cupp that the Guatemalan enzootic vector, *Culex taeniopus*, was incompetent to act as a vector of the epizootic strain was a revolutionary contribution.

Dr. Scherer received the Theobald Smith Award of the AAAS in 1959 and the Outstanding Civilian Service Medal (Department of the Army) in 1972.

His membership in societies and services on advisory committees was too long to account in full. He was Vice President of the Tissue Culture Association from 1958-60 and Chairman of the Cell Culture Collection Committee of the HCI from 1961-65. He was a member of the AFEB Commission on Viral Infection from 1961-72 and its Director from 1965-72 and a Consultant to the Office of the Surgeon

General of the US Army from 1972-82. He served on the Board of Trustees of the ATCC from 1961-66 and was Chairman of the Cell Culture Advisory Committee in 1965.

Dr. Scherer was one of the founders of the American Committee on Arthropod-Borne Viruses, serving on its Council from 1961-65 and in 1978 until his death in 1982, and its Chairman from 1963-65. He participated in chaired subcommittees on Information Exchange from 1959-65, Serologic Reagents (1959-66), Interrelationships among Catalogued Arboviruses (1967-76) and on Laboratory Safety (1974-1982).

Dr. Scherer was a member of the editorial boards and an active reviewer for eight journals including the *AJTMH*.