

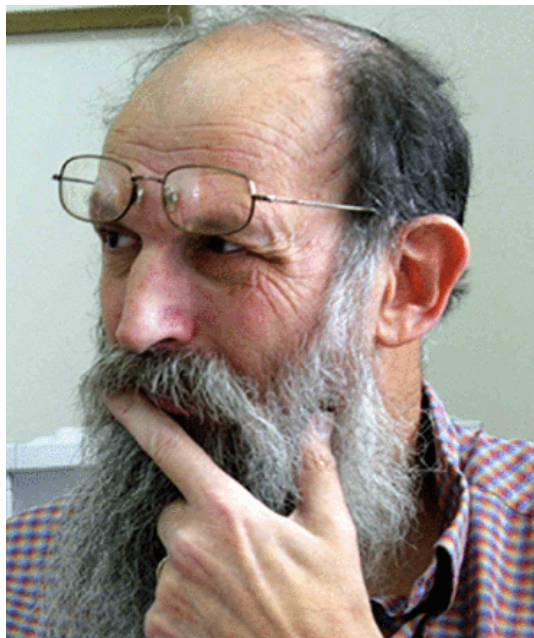
Obituaries

Michael Asher Weingarten

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Susan Weingarten



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Michael Asher ("Micky") Weingarten was professor of family medicine at Tel Aviv University and a key founder of the new Bar-Ilan Faculty of Medicine in Safed in Galilee.

Micky was born in 1947 in Golders Green, London to a family of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. He was educated at the City of London School; Jews' College, London; Merton College, Oxford; and University College Hospital, London.

He emigrated to Israel and began his training as a family doctor in 1973. A few weeks later, the Yom Kippur war broke out, and he found himself, a very junior hospital doctor, as the "consultant" in internal medicine to the burns unit, for the wounded soldiers brought in from the Suez Canal. After this war, he continued his GP training in the deprived development town of Bet Shean, living on a local kibbutz. When called up to the army, he served as a doctor on the helicopter rescue unit, where he did reserve duty for 20 years. During the Lebanon war, he was once in command of a helicopter that included two wounded soldiers, an Israeli and an enemy Lebanese.

On discharge he moved back to central Israel, where he asked the local sick fund for work in "their local Bet Shean." They sent him to Rosh HaAyin, one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the country, home to Yemenite Jewish immigrants who lived in poverty and struggled to adapt to their new Western way of life. He decided to give it a trial for five years: in the end he stayed for 35. He was delighted when, in his first weeks, his new patients, all traditionally religious Jews, would come in and remind him: "You know, doctor, you are only an emissary [of God]." Many of his patients could not afford the minimal prescription charges on regular drugs. While protesting this on a local and national level, he realised this was not enough, and set up a fund to ensure that his patients could receive, anonymously, the drugs they could not afford to buy. He used to say that Rosh HaAyin had the largest concentration of Jewish Yemenites in history, and he focused his research on the community, publishing his book *Changing Health and Changing Culture: The Yemenite Jews in Israel* (Praeger, 1992). In recognition of his contribution to the community, he was awarded the Rosh HaAyin regional council personal certificate of esteem in 1983, the Rosh HaAyin municipal award for outstanding voluntary service in 2007, and in 2010 the Israeli Association of Family Physicians award for outstanding lifetime contribution to the profession.

Alongside his clinical work, Micky was also a member of the Sackler Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University from 1978, and committed himself to the medical education of the next generation of doctors. He was made clinical professor in 1999 and was chairman of both the department of family medicine, and the department of behavioural sciences for three cycles. Micky was elected president of the Israel Association of Family Physicians and chairman of the Israel Association of Family Physicians.

He published papers in a wide variety of subjects, apart from his Yemenite patients, and was often the first in the field by many years.



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Micky leaves his wife, five children, and 14 grandchildren. Dozy leaves his students came from all over the country to his family's week of mourning, so there is some hope that his vision that the medical school should not only produce doctors who are technically excellent and trained in the best of modern medicine, but also caring human beings, will be realised, at least in part.

Professor of family medicine Tel Aviv University (b 1947; q Oxford 1971; MA), died from metastatic cancer of the prostate on 23 February 2018

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