



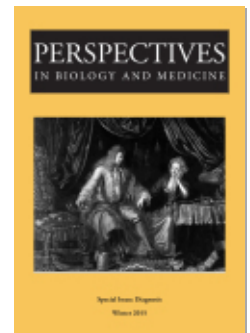
PROJECT MUSE®

Richard L. Landau (1916-2015)

Robert L. Perlman

Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, Volume 58, Number 1, Winter 2015, pp. V-VI (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: [10.1353/pbm.2015.0009](https://doi.org/10.1353/pbm.2015.0009)



➔ For additional information about this article

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pbm/summary/v058/58.1.perlman.html>

RICHARD L. LANDAU (1916–2015)

Richard Landau, the longtime editor of *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, died on November 3, 2015. Richard grew up in St. Louis. Like many people of his generation, he was inspired to become a physician by Paul de Kruif's book *Microbe Hunters* (1926). Richard went to college and medical school at Washington University in St. Louis and came to the University of Chicago in 1940 as a resident in medicine. Except for a two-year stint in the army during World War II, he spent the rest of his career at the university, rising through the academic ranks to become Professor of Medicine in 1959. Richard held several important administrative positions at the university; he served as Chief of the Section of Endocrinology, as Program Director of our Clinical Research Center, and as the first Chairman of our Institutional Review Board. He is known at the university for building an outstanding endocrinology program, for mentoring many younger physicians and clinical investigators, and for instilling in his trainees and colleagues the highest ethical standards of patient care and of clinical research. In the wider academic community, he is known for his pioneering studies on the metabolic effects of steroid hormones. As a person, Richard held strong opinions and was outspoken in expressing them. He seemed to take special pleasure in criticizing the medical school administration. Although he may sometimes have been brusque, he was never mean or demeaning.

Richard became Editor of *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* in 1973 and remained Editor for over 30 years; for many readers, he came to personify the journal. Richard had clear ideas about the journal's mission. Perhaps because he grew up in Missouri, Richard was a big fan of Mark Twain, and he used Twain's essays as a model for what the journal should publish. He did not want the staid, heavy prose found in most scientific and medical journals. Instead, he wanted the writing to be lively and personal, and to reflect the human side of medical practice and of biomedical research.

I met Richard when I was a medical student. At that time, I, like many of my classmates, was a little frightened by his gruff manner. He had high standards, and if we didn't live up to those standards, he let us know. In 1984, after we had chatted about *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* at some social event, Richard invited me to join the editorial board of the journal. Several years later, he began to groom me to be his successor. For many years, we met weekly to discuss manuscripts, the journal, and life. He taught me the editor's craft and made possible one of the most enjoyable

and rewarding aspects of my academic career. Like many of his clinical and research trainees, I am grateful for his guidance and counsel, and for the opportunities he made available to me.

One of Richard's last papers was entitled "Death Is Not the Enemy" (Landau and Gustafson 1984). He was particularly proud of this paper, which he wrote with his friend Jim Gustafson, a theologian in the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. In this paper, Richard and Jim wrote that death is an integral aspect of human life and that "The real enemies are disease, discomfort, disability, fear, and anxiety." Richard was fortunate to have lived most of his life free of the real enemies. The many people whose lives he enriched will remember and miss him.

ROBERT L. PERLMAN

Editor Emeritus, *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*
r-perlman@uchicago.edu

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Landau, Richard L., and James M. Gustafson. 1984. "Death Is Not the Enemy." *JAMA* 252 (17): 2458.

