

In Memoriam



Gabriella E. Molnar-Swofford, M.D.
April 8th 1926–October 20th 2011

Gabriella E. Molnar-Swofford, M.D. was born in 1926 in Hungary. She graduated from the medical school of Budapest in 1950 and became a board certified pediatrician in 1954. In 1956 during the Hungarian Anticommunist Revolution, she, her husband and daughter succeeded in escaping from Hungary by crossing the Austrian border at the Bridge of Andau. The very next day, this bridge was destroyed by the Russian military. They came to the United States on a special immigration quota for Hungarians within a few weeks and settled in New York in November of 1956. She received her license to practice medicine in New York State. She became board certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and joined the faculty of that department at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York where she rose from the rank of instructor in 1962 to full time tenured Professor by 1977. In 1982 she moved to California and started a new department of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine at the Children's Hospital and Research Center in Oakland, California. Shortly after moving to California her first husband passed away. She also became a Clinical Professor for the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of California, Davis.

Dr. Molnar achieved a National and International reputation in her special field of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine. She has trained 23 physicians in this field, including post-residency Fellows from the United States, Canada, Australia, Philippines and Israel. She published 46 scientific articles and 5 books on the subject of rehabilitating children with physical handicaps. Her guiding principle has always been that children are not miniature adults, but individuals with

changing physical, intellectual, and emotional abilities and needs. At every age, therefore, the principles of rehabilitation medicine have to be adapted to these changing aptitudes. Dr. Molnar served on the editorial board of the *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* from 1976 to 1994 and the *Journal of Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* from 1992 to 1997. She was invited to present lectures in numerous medical schools and academies in the United States, Oxford, England, and several cities in Australia and Europe. As an acknowledgement of her clinical, educational and scientific contributions she received several awards. These included the California Physician of the Year Award from the governors committee, and from the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation the Distinguished Clinicians Award and the Frank Krusen Award. The latter is the highest acknowledgement given for outstanding contributions in medical education, practice and scientific activities. Her life-long interests and hobbies included classical music, opera, visual arts, reading, puzzles, travel and decorative embroidery.

Dr. Molnar retired in 1996. She is survived by her daughter and two grandchildren and husband of 12 years, Jack T. Swafford, SR

The Gabriella E. Molnar Research and Education Fund is being established through the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. The fund will provide annual grants, awards and support for outstanding contributions to the field of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine. Donations to the fund are greatly appreciated.