

honoree was Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS'55, Hon.'59), always said "reproductive rights and civil rights are intertwined."

His decision to become "a women's doctor," Edelin recounted in his memoir, was born out of the painful experience at age 12 of watching his 46-year-old mother succumb slowly to breast cancer. Saved "from the dangers of the streets of segregated Washington, D.C.," when he received a full scholarship to the progressive Stockbridge School in the Berkshires, Edelin went on to college at Columbia and earned a medical degree in 1967 at Meharry Medical College.

Edelin's legal battle strengthened his commitment to a woman's right to access to legal abortion and made him "a folk hero" in clinics across the nation, said Sherrilyn Ifill, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund president and director-counsel.

David Acker, a Harvard Medical School associate professor of OB/GYN, first met Edelin in 1979 when he did a fellowship at Boston City Hospital, where Edelin was director of obstetrics and

gynecology. "He was a chairman who actually cared about the patients," said Acker, recalling that while Edelin forgave lapses on the more arcane points in his charges' medical knowledge, "it was never okay to treat patients disrespectfully." He "taught us not to ignore the little things," and to be aware of the social and economic hardships that played a role in a patient's condition.

Acker remembered standing with Edelin by his office window, when Edelin noticed a group of residents removing their ties as they walked from the neighboring private hospital to Boston City Hospital. "You tell them," he instructed Acker, "that if they wear a tie at the university hospital, they'll wear a tie at BCH."

Edelin, retired from teaching since 2006, was also a poet, whose zest for living and devotion to service resound through his verse. In his final poem, "The Labyrinth of Life," written shortly before his death, he implores the reader not to "give in to loser's talk" and not to be "paralyzed by fright." He concludes: "The journey's course will set you free / This journey is your life, you see."

MED's Joel Alpert Dies at 83

Pediatrician remembered as strong advocate of primary care

By Leslie Friday

Joel Alpert loved the Yale Bulldogs, believed men should wear ties, hated smoking, and relished a good debate. But among his many passions, he most ardently supported the provision of quality primary care to the children and families he served as the one-time chief of pediatrics at Boston Medical Center (BMC).

Arriving at BMC (then Boston City Hospital) in 1972, Alpert, a School of Medicine professor and chair emeritus of pediatrics, "came into a challenging situation and basically, at a time when everyone was moving to subspecialty care, put the limelight on primary care pediatrics," says Robert Vinci, MED's Joel and Barbara Alpert Professor of Pediatrics and department chair and current BMC chief of pediatrics. "He turned around this institution. He led with strength, with vision, and he became one of the national figures in academic pediatrics."

Alpert, who was also MED assistant dean for student affairs and a member of the Dean's Advisory Board, died of leukemia on December 31, 2013, while in hospice care near his home in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. He was 83.

During his four decades at MED and BMC, Alpert pioneered pediatric primary care training and the development of a curriculum that emphasized child development, advocacy, and community care. He held several leadership positions in major pediatric associations and earned numerous awards throughout his career. His writings, including *The Education of Physicians for Primary Care* in 1974, still define the practice today.

"Joel Alpert was a recognized leader in pediatric care and



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medical policy,” says Karen Antman, Medical Campus provost and MED dean. “He was an enormous influence on generations of medical students for whom he served as a role model and mentor and held himself, his department faculty, and students to the highest academic standards.”

Alpert was a vociferous advocate of universal health care long before it was politically in vogue. His position was likely rooted, colleagues say, in his Judaism, his focus on equity, and his experience serving as a doctor in London in 1958 and as an Army physician in Kansas in the early 1960s. He completed his residency at Boston Children’s Hospital and joined the Harvard faculty in 1961. A decade later, he arrived at Boston City Hospital, MED’s primary teaching hospital, where patients largely come from the city’s underserved populations. In an American Academy of Pediatrics interview, he credited his mentor, Charles Alderson Janeway, then the physician in chief at Boston Children’s Hospital, for the advice that pushed him in that direction: “At Harvard, you will teach the people who teach,” Janeway told him. “At Boston University, you will teach the people who do.”

Alpert drilled the value of primary care and community-based pediatrics into the generations of doctors he trained. One of those doctors, Barry Zuckerman, the first Joel and Barbara Alpert Professor of Pediatrics, remembers how his mentor insisted that physicians show up at their clinics, continue to care for patients beyond their first appointments, and ensure that all patients’ needs were met—regardless of whether those needs were medical. “Back in 1972, that just wasn’t done,” says Zuckerman.

Alpert campaigned tirelessly around issues of lead poisoning and gun control—even proudly pointing to his position on the National Rifle Association’s enemies list, according to the *Boston Globe*. And he despised smoking. Zuckerman remembers a conference Alpert hosted at his home in the early 1970s, where he insisted that anyone who wanted to smoke—including the woman who had helped endow the event—step outside the house, despite the rain. “You can’t fully appreciate how obnoxious he was” about smoking, Zuckerman says.

Born and raised in New Haven, Conn., Alpert graduated from Yale University in 1952. He earned a degree from Harvard Medical School four years later, but remained loyal to his undergraduate alma mater. He attended more than 50 Harvard vs. Yale football games over the years and always rooted for the Bulldogs, Vinci says.

In 2000, Alpert and his wife, Barbara, established the Joel and Barbara Alpert Professorship in Pediatrics, which is held by the department chair. That same year, the couple established the Children of the City Fund at BMC to support early career pediatric researchers who study issues affecting inner-city children served by the hospital.

MARK ALLEN, 53, lecturer, Boston University London Program, on January 8, 2014.

Allen worked with American study abroad students—mostly from BU—for more than 25 years. He taught British literature in the BU Oxford Honors Study Program from 1986 until the program was closed in 2008. He had been teaching in BU’s London Program since 1996 and was the coordinator and lead lecturer for the literature track of the recently created English history and literature program.



A popular and gifted lecturer, Allen had a passion for his subject, a sense of humor, and a sincere interest in his students, who never doubted that their opinions mattered, even as they were challenged to think beyond their comfort level.

Allen earned an MA in English literature from Mansfield College, Oxford. He tutored in several Oxford University colleges and held a lecturing post at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. He also spent two years teaching in Italy and lectured at the University of Venice. He published reviews and articles on Romanticism in several academic journals and also worked for the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a historical reader specializing in the works of Coleridge.

The following appreciation was written by Dee Mondschein (CAS’97), who studied under Allen during a study abroad semester in London. The two

remained friends until Allen’s death.

I had the privilege of knowing Mark Allen, first as a student in Boston University’s Study Abroad program at Oxford and then as a friend when I went back to Oxford to read for a Master of Philosophy. I then moved to London to work on the *Spectator* magazine and lived there for another five years or so. I visited with him when I made trips to Oxford. When I moved back to New York, we stayed in touch through long and lively emails, and I saw him every time I went to England. He connected with so many students, and the academic world will be the lesser for his passing.

He was an erudite scholar and a gifted teacher. For many students on the program, it was their first experience with a teacher as a real person. Oxford is different from American universities: a student can have a drink with tutors (what we in America would call professors) and can call them by their first names. Mark often took us all out for drinks at the Lamb & Flag. He’d sit at the head of the tables we’d pushed together and ask *us* questions. He was genuinely interested in learning from us—about America and Americans. And by teaching so many of us, he’d picked up the lingo. (It was funny to hear him say, “Dammit!”)

But make no mistake, when it was time for class, we had better come prepared. Mark pushed us. He made us read *Ulysses* aloud, one at a time, going around the room. It made such a difference to hear it,