



**REPORT CARD:** In the National Research Council's ranking of 5,000 U.S. doctoral programs, pharmacology-toxicology and physiology at DMS were among the top 10 such programs nationally and molecular and cellular biology was in the top 20.

For a **WEB EXTRA** with links to articles about McCollum's appointment and accomplishments as dean at DMS, see [dartmed.dartmouth.edu/w10/we05](http://dartmed.dartmouth.edu/w10/we05).

## Heartfelt remembrances of a modest Texan

Imagine a born-and-bred Texan without a hint of a swagger. A dean who eschewed the perks of the office while presiding over a period of enormous growth. A researcher so modest that many people didn't know about his significant scientific accomplishments. That's a start on conjuring up what made Dr. Robert McCollum tick.

**Dean:** The dean of Dartmouth Medical School from 1982 to 1990, McCollum died of heart failure on September 13 at his home in Etna, N.H. He was 85.

His obituary in the *New York Times* hailed his contributions to helping to isolate the polio virus in the early 1950s, distinguish serum hepatitis from infectious hepatitis, and identify the cause of infectious mononucleosis.



DMS Dean Emeritus Robert McCollum.

And his tenure as DMS's dean, after 12 years as chair of epidemiology and public health at Yale, was one of notable productivity: research income rose 377%; eight new endowed chairs were funded; and the agreement was forged to move DHMC to Lebanon, N.H.

But it was McCollum's personal qualities that were at the fore at an October 16 celebration of his life. Born in Waco, Texas, he graduated from Baylor, then earned an M.D. at Johns Hopkins and a doctorate in public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He is survived by his wife, Audrey; son, Douglas; and daughter, Cynthia, all of whom spoke at the October 16 event. They shared amusing anecdotes, including the fact that McCollum had a stash of much-wrinkled wrapping paper that he reused for years, so committed was he to the environment.

**Rung:** A number of colleagues and friends also spoke. "I remember when I was the lowest rung on the academic ladder—a brand new assistant professor," said Dr. David Nierenberg, now senior associate dean for medical education. "There was this . . . dean who would come up to me in the hall, know my face, know my name, and ask me in detail how things were going. . . . It just amazed me that a dean who had so much to worry about was actually concerned about a brand new rookie."

**O'Donnell also extolled McCollum's "infectious smile" and "integrity."**

Nierenberg also commented on McCollum's "wonderful, laconic, usually dry, sometimes ironic sense of humor."

Jane Hebb, who worked with McCollum in the bioepidemiology section after he stepped down as dean, offered an example: "He would always send us postcards of . . . creepy-looking insects" when he traveled, she said. So one year "a coworker made him a birthday cake and baked a big, black gummy rat in the cake to get even. How he laughed when he cut into the cake and found the rat."

**Listen:** Dr. Joseph O'Donnell, who has been involved with student affairs ever since McCollum tapped him for that duty, said, "What I remember most about Bob was his ability to listen, to hear diverse opinions—and to mold them into a whole. . . . Decisions were joint, with lots of input, honesty, and trust."

"I marvelled at Bob's humility, his complete disregard for the trappings of power," O'Donnell went on. "My enduring memory of him was ensconced in his little, unpretentious office with . . . piles of paper all around, writing thousands of hand-written notes to celebrate the achievements of others. . . . Bob reveled in the success of others."

O'Donnell also extolled McCollum's "infectious smile, . . . integrity, and genuineness," attributing to those qualities his "success at fund-raising . . . [donors] just loved him," he said.

Lots of people did, it's clear.  
DANA COOK GROSSMAN

## THEN & NOW

A reminder of the pace of change, and of timeless truths, from the 1980 DMS admissions brochure:

"A medical school's reputation is ultimately established by . . . [its graduates'] competence and compassion. . . . Dartmouth Medical School alumni are among the nation's most respected physicians and scientists, and their contributions to the . . . profession belie their small numbers. [DMS] now has 1,565 living alumni."



**4,505**

DMS alumni today, some of whom hold multiple degrees

**75%**

Percent who hold an M.D.

**10%**

Percent who hold a Ph.D. or M.S. in the sciences

**16%**

Percent who hold an M.P.H. or health-policy degree