

**Memorial Resolution for Allan Rosenfield  
New York Obstetrical Society, February 10, 2009**

Allan Rosenfield, past President of this Society, died on October 12, 2008 of ALS (or “Lou Gehrig’s disease”). I had the privilege of working with him at Columbia University for over 20 years, I know first hand how many of us in obstetrics and gynecology, and in public health, do far better work because of his inspiration and his guidance, and I know how many of us miss him terribly.

Allan built a legacy of inspired leadership in the field of public health. He brought his considerable intellect, passion, courage, and persistence to addressing the public health concerns, most particularly related to this Society in the fields of family planning and maternal mortality. Dr. Rosenfield was Dean of Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health for 22 years.

His broad vision to improve women’s health includes groundbreaking work in areas such as training non-medical personnel in prescribing contraceptives; averting maternal mortality and morbidity from pregnancy-related complications; care and treatment for HIV-infected women and children in resource-limited settings globally.

Growing up in Brookline, Massachusetts, Allan Rosenfield got his introduction to the medical profession from his father, Dr. Harold Rosenfield, a successful Boston obstetrician-gynecologist. He earned his BA in biochemistry from Harvard College and his MD from Columbia University’s College of Physicians & Surgeons. He served in the US Air Force and spent a year working in a maternity hospital in Lagos, Nigeria.

Dr. Rosenfield’s work in Thailand in the 1960s with the Population Council where he served as an advisor to the Thai Ministry of Public health on reproductive and maternal and child health, proved to be a turning point in his career. In a country where the average family had seven children and the population growth rate was 3.3%, his work evolved into a large-scale project to develop a national family planning program. In an effort to address women’s limited access to contraception—and the shortage of physicians—he pushed for the training of auxiliary midwives to prescribe birth control pills. Thanks in part to his pioneering efforts, by the year 2000, these figures had dropped to 1.6 children per family and a 0.8% growth rate.

In 1975, Columbia University recruited Dr. Rosenfield as a professor of Public Health and Ob/Gyn and to head the newly named Center for Population and Family Health at the University’s School of Public Health. Dr. Rosenfield strengthened the Center’s global programs, and simultaneously worked to implement family planning and reproductive health service programs in the School’s own backyard of Northern Manhattan. With colleague Judith Jones, Dr. Rosenfield build community-based programs including the Young Adult Clinic; the pioneering Young Men’s Clinic; and school-based clinics located in intermediate and high schools throughout Upper Manhattan. During these years, Allan also directed the ambulatory clinics of the department of Ob/Gyn, and served as acting chairman of the department.

In 1986, the same year that Dr. Rosenfield was appointed Dean of the Mailman School of Public Health, Dr. Rosenfield and colleague Dr. Deborah Maine co-authored a paper on maternal mortality that posed the question, “Where is the M in MCH? (Maternal and Child Health)?” Published in *The Lancet*, it called attention to the crisis in women’s health where providers focused on the health of children at the expense of the health and lives of women. This seminal paper spawned a movement that galvanized the attention of international health groups and policy makers to focus on poor maternal health, and led to the Safe Motherhood Initiative. Dr. Rosenfield’s continued efforts to improve women’s access to emergency obstetric care led to the involvement of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which awarded the Mailman School \$50 million in 1999 to create the Averting Maternal Death and Disability Program (AMDD). AMDD was the only global effort of its kind, and it developed and supports more than 85 safe motherhood initiatives in over 50 countries around the world.

In the late 1990s, as the HIV/AIDS pandemic raged, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (pMTCT) of the virus were focused on saving babies lives, but treatment was not provided to the mother. Dr. Rosenfield was one of the first leaders in the field to speak out about this critical problem at the World AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa. He energized the international community to action. With support from nine private foundations, he and colleagues created the MTCT-Plus Initiative, a global, family-based program focused on comprehensive care and treatment for mothers and children. In 2004, under the leadership of Dr. Wafaa El-Sadr, and with a \$125 million grant from the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Mailman School expanded its involvement in AIDS care and treatment and created its International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs. To date, the programs developed under the innovative model have enrolled more than 500,000 people.

Allan Rosenfield’s appointment as dean marked the beginning of an unprecedented period of growth and recognition for Columbia’s School of Public Health. With steady determination, he harnessed the School’s potential and transformed what was once a small department into one of the preeminent schools of public health in the country. During his tenure, the School’s budget increased from \$12 million in 1986 to \$161 million, and the endowment soared from \$2 million to \$86 million.

Dr. Rosenfield served as national chair of Planned Parenthood Federation of America,. For 10 years Dr. Rosenfield served as chair of New York State's AIDS Advisory Council, where he made lasting achievements in guiding New York's policies and procedures regarding HIV and AIDS. He was also chair of the Program Board of the American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR), a member of the boards of the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Packard Foundation, and served on the boards and committees of many other non-profit and governmental organizations.

He is survived by his wife Clare, son Paul, daughter Jill, and five grandchildren,