



December 22, 2021

Bruce B. Boecker, July 9, 1932 – December 1, 2021 In Memoriam



Bruce B. Boecker passed away on December 1, 2021, at the age of 89 after a brief but valiant fight with cancer. Those of us who had the pleasure to know and work with Bruce over his career will miss very much his scholarship, collegiality, abilities to work effectively with others, his gentle spirit, and keen wit.

After receiving a BS in physics from Grinnell College, studying radiological physics at the University of Washington, and serving a 2 y stint with the U.S. Air Force as a First Lieutenant, Dr. Boecker completed his graduate studies in radiobiology and health physics at the University of Rochester. He then joined the Lovelace Inhalation Toxicology Research Institute (ITRI) in 1961 as a radiobiologist; in short order, he was promoted to Assistant Director of the Radiation Studies Programs, a position he held for over 30 y. Without a doubt, Dr. Boecker's role in managing and participating in ITRI's signature accomplishments from the multispecies lifespan studies of inhaled radionuclides was a result of his experience in designing and executing studies using radioactive materials. He was a strong contributing member of the interdisciplinary teams required for such complex studies, and his superb skills in managing both the science and the scientists involved were exemplary. His personal imprint can be recognized in most of the 300+ publications that resulted from this ITRI program.

Dr. Boecker was first elected to NCRP in 1987 and became a Distinguished Emeritus Member in 1999. However, Bruce's first formal involvement with NCRP began in 1976 when he became a member of SC 54 on Bioassay for Assessment of Control of Intake of Radionuclides. Soon thereafter (1977), Bruce became Chairman of Task Group 3 of SC 57 on Metabolic Models for Internally Deposited Radionuclides. During the period 1985 to 1999, Dr. Boecker became a full member of SC 57 on Dosimetry and Metabolism of Radionuclides and served as Chair for the last 5 y of that umbrella and program area committee. Bruce's contributions to the science of internal emitter dosimetry and health effects, plus his superior management skills led to the publication of several important and impressive NCRP reports, most of which have not been superseded despite their varied vintages (Report 89 – *Genetic Effects from Internally Deposited Radionuclides*; Report 90 – *Neptunium: Radiation Protection Guidelines*; Report 110 – *Some Aspects of Strontium Radiobiology*; Report 117 – *Research Needs for Radiation Protection*; Report 128 – *Radionuclide exposure of the Embryo/Fetus*; Report 135 – *Liver Cancer Risk from Internally-Deposited Radionuclides*; Report 156 – *Development of a Biokinetic Model for Radionuclide-Contaminated Wounds and Procedures for their Assessment, Dosimetry and Treatment*).

Dr. Boecker's impact on radiation health science was also manifested over his career in the form of membership and chairmanship in committees, task groups, scientific review groups of the International Commission on Radiological Protection, National Academies of Science, U. S. Department of Energy and its predecessors, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, International Agency for Research on Cancer, Oak Ridge Associated Universities/National Cancer Institute, and Sandia National Laboratory. He was a charter member of the Health Physics Society (HPS), recipient of the Distinguished Scientific Achievement Award, HPS Fellow, member of the Board of Directors, and of numerous committees.

Dr. Boecker is survived by his devoted wife of 60 y, Ellie Boecker, daughter Nancy Boecker, son Brian, daughter-in-law Crystal and granddaughters, Bayley, Isabella and Ellie Rose.