



Mailman School Faculty Honor Allan Rosenfield

At the April School Assembly, Executive Vice Dean Andrew Davidson invited a faculty member from each of the School's six departments to speak about Dr. Rosenfield's impact on each of the departments over his 22 years as dean.

Bruce Levin, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Biostatistics, was the first to take the microphone and, much to the surprise and delight of the audience, began by affectionately roasting Dr. Rosenfield. After recounting several humorous anecdotes, Dr. Levin spoke of Dr. Rosenfield's dedication to the School and credited him with giving the Department of Biostatistics the resources it needed to grow from a small division of statisticians into an independent department and a major service center on the Columbia University Medical Center campus.

Following Dr. Levin, Regina Santella, PhD, professor of Environmental Health Sciences (EHS) and director of the NIEHS Center for Environmental Health in Northern Manhattan, spoke of the myriad initiatives, programs, and centers that Dr. Rosenfield was instrumental in founding and promoting during his tenure—the Columbia Superfund Basic Research Program, the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health, and the NIEHS Center for Environmental Health in Northern Manhattan to name just a few. "Of particular importance for the future of EHS and the School," said Dr. Santella, "is Dr. Rosenfield's role in securing \$10 million for new laboratory space for the Department."

Michael Sparer, JD, PhD, professor of Health Policy and Management, thanked Dr. Rosenfield for his tremendous support of his department, especially the Executive MPH Program in Health Care Management, which Dr. Sparer directs. Dr. Sparer noted Dr. Rosenfield's presence at various policy talks and events over the years. Said Dr. Sparer, "At event after event, when it came time for the audience to ask the speaker questions, without fail, Dr. Rosenfield would stand up and say, 'Why can't the U.S. convert to a single-payer healthcare system?'" Dr. Sparer noted Dr. Rosenfield's firm belief in basic human rights, and his unwavering dedication to establishing a truly just healthcare system in the United States.

Next to speak was Ezra Susser, MD, DrPH, Anna Cheskis Gelman and Murray Charles Gelman Professor and chair of the Department of Epidemiology. He too spoke of the initiatives Dr. Rosenfield spearheaded as dean of the School, particularly in the area of infectious disease and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Specifically, Dr. Susser mentioned the International Center for AIDS

Care and Treatment Programs, the Center for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa, and the Center for Infection and Immunity. He stated that programs such as these positioned the School as a global leader, and that Dr. Rosenfield never stopped asking the question, “What can we do next?”

Dr. Susser also thanked Dr. Rosenfield for his support in the areas of psychiatric epidemiology, cancer epidemiology, and community-based research. On a more personal note, he spoke of Dr. Rosenfield as a role model who follows his principles to the highest level.”

Wendy Chavkin, MD, professor of clinical Population and Family Health, began by saying, “Population and Family Health at the Mailman School is Allan Rosenfield. He founded the Department and molded it into what it is today.” She went on to mention the breadth of his vision and the passion that drove his beliefs: “Each and every program in the Department is infused with a human rights perspective, from our local family planning and school-based initiatives to our global efforts to address maternal mortality and reproductive rights. Many of these programs were considered contentious at the time Dr. Rosenfield pushed for them, and he never once backed down.”

Amy Fairchild, PhD, associate professor of Sociomedical Sciences (SMS), rounded out the tribute by thanking Dr. Rosenfield for creating an atmosphere in which scholars could flourish. “Dr. Rosenfield has fostered an environment that supports faculty who wish to pursue the long, intricate process of writing and publishing.” She cited that more than 40 books have been published in the past decade in SMS alone.

Dr. Fairchild informed the audience that she is currently working on a book about Dr. Rosenfield’s life, and how difficult it has been for “a man of action” to submit to the slow pace essential to the research and writing process. Said Dr. Fairchild, “Context matters. Understanding the where, when, how, and why someone did what they did is integral to understanding the person. To capture Dr. Rosenfield is to capture the moments that changed his life, and the lives of so many others.”

At the end, Dr. Rosenfield thanked the speakers and took a moment to express his appreciation for the contributions of the entire Mailman School Community during his tenure as dean.