



Jacob Gershon-Cohen, M.D., D.Sc.
In Memoriam

March 17, 1971

Dr. J. Gershon-Cohen died in Philadelphia on February 6, 1971 after two years of increasing coronary difficulty and intermittent hospitalization. Many of us lost a friend, many more a charming and cultivated acquaintance, and the world of medicine a distinguished scientist and scholar.

About fourteen years ago Dr. Gershon-Cohen came across a copy of *Current Contents*®. At that time it was sold primarily to pharmaceutical manufacturers. He telephoned me and asked how he could subscribe. He also suggested that "many people outside of industry have been waiting for something like this. Why don't you offer *Current Contents* to them?" He suggested a price of about \$100 per year and that is what we adopted as the base rate. Furthermore, he graciously accepted my request that he serve on the Editorial Advisory Board. He served on that Board for more than ten years, during which time I learned to love and respect him as a person as well as a professional colleague.

Jacob Gershon-Cohen was born in Philadelphia on January 9, 1899, one of eight children of immigrant parents. Family problems forced him to leave high school, but a scholarship enabled him to finish and to enter the University of Pennsylvania. There he earned his tuition for a premedical degree by selling delicatessen foods door-to-door and playing weekends in a jazz band.

A pharmacist to whom he was referred for additional part-time employment turned out to be a Miss Sara Eskin. He married her, and they worked together to attain his graduation from the University's medical school.

It was the beginning of a long distinguished career in radiology, as researcher, teacher and practitioner. Dr. Gershon-Cohen was Director of Radiology at the Albert Einstein Medical Center, Professor of Radiology at the University of Pennsylvania, and Professor of Research Radiology at Temple University. He is credited with conception of telegnosis--the transmission of x-ray images over telephone lines--and, later, with videognosis--the use of television for the same purpose. A few weeks before he died he had demonstrated that diagnosable roentgenograms could be transmitted by the new Bell Picturephone®.

Among his 400-odd publications are those on GI physiology, osteoporosis, medical education, ultrasonography, panoramic and color roentgenography, but especially--his prime interest--mammography, on which he wrote two books and more than 125 articles. His work in this field led to his development of thermography, of which he was acknowledged the pioneer in this country. He was President of both the American Thermographic and the Philadelphia Roentgen Ray Societies, served on countless boards and committees

and received many national and international awards.

He was also a first-rate violinist, who regularly played quartets with members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Curtis Institute, and with such visiting virtuosos as David Oistrakh. He played a Stradivarius that had been owned by Catherine of Russia, an instrument which Oistrakh frequently attempted to persuade him to part with.

Dr. Gershon-Cohen was an accomplished man; he believed himself extraordinarily lucky for the devotion of his students, the steadfastness of his friends, and the abilities which

allowed him a range of interests that exercised his talents. This concept of a lucky life was typical of a man whose own devotion, loyalty, and hard work he found reflected in the world around him. The Friday before he died he left his office, cheerful and seemingly well, planning to return on Monday to continue work on 15 articles and a book still in progress. His wife died in 1968; he left no children. For and with the many other friends he left, one of them would like here to note his death with personal sadness and grateful memory.