

DR. SHEPARD ARONSON,
FEMINIST PHYSICIAN, DIES AT 90

DR. SHEPARD GERARD ARONSON, a leader in medical and feminist circles who brought the two worlds together for historic results, died Monday morning at Pascack Valley Hospital, Westwood, NJ. He was 90.

The cause of death was complications of lymphoma, according to his wife of 48 years, Muriel Fox.

Dr Aronson served as president of the Society of Internal Medicine of the County of New York and a member of the Board of Directors of the New York County Medical Society and also its Board of Censors. He served on the Medical Society's Peer Review Committee for seven years and chaired it for three years.

"Shep" Aronson was the first chair of the board elected by the New York Chapter of the National Organization for Women in 1968. This was NOW's first local chapter in the nation. He attended the organizing conference of NOW in Washington, D.C. October 29-30, 1966 with his wife and assumed major responsibility for their small son and daughter that weekend while Ms Fox handled press relations for the new organization.

When a colleague at a medical gathering asked him why he was working for the women's movement, Dr. Aronson responded, "I want my wife to make more money."

While he chaired the board of New York NOW in 1968, many board and chapter meetings were held in the Aronsons' spacious apartment on Madison Avenue and East 83rd Street. It was the chapter's most ideologically contentious year, ending in the October 21 resignation of a group headed by chapter president Ti-Grace Atkinson.

In 1981 Dr. Aronson organized and chaired the New York County Medical Society's Joint Committee of Nurses and Physicians, the country's first physician-nurse committee in which nurses were equal partners and a nurse co-chaired with a physician. This committee campaigned for joint education programs for physicians and nurses and for the creation of joint nurse-physician committees in Greater New York hospitals.

Dr. Aronson also organized a New York County Medical Society meeting with women's groups about "What's Wrong with Doctors' Attitudes Toward Female Patients." This resulted in a report that was distributed by the Society to physicians throughout the world. It was summarized in a long article by Nan

Robertson in the New York Times on August 29, 1980.

Dr. Aronson represented the Medical Society frequently in newspaper, radio and television interviews; and in the summer of 1970 he debated against his longtime personal friend Dr. Edgar Berman, who claimed that women could not lead governments and businesses because of the "raging hormonal influences of their menstrual cycles." Dr. Aronson was quoted by New York Times reporter Marylin Bender saying that women's occasional menstrual dysfunction "certainly doesn't compare with Addison's disease and a broken back, or having ileitis, a stroke and heart trouble," referring to afflictions suffered by U.S. Presidents Kennedy, Eisenhower and Johnson.

He also served on the medical advisory board of Planned Parenthood of New York. His essay, "Marriage with a Successful Woman: A Personal Viewpoint," was published in Women and Success by William Morrow in 1974.

When David Susskind's network TV show "*Open End*," interviewed a panel of feminist men in 1972, Susskind taunted him: "But Dr. Aronson, how would you feel if your wife made more money than you do?" His reply: "Relaxed!"

A Diplomate in Internal Medicine, Dr. Aronson served as Chief of the Endocrine Clinic at New York University Hospital; Chief, Department of Metabolic Diseases and Diabetes Clinic at Good Samaritan Hospital; Chief, Diabetes Clinic at Stuyvesant Polyclinic; and Attending Physician at New York Infirmity-Beekman Downtown Hospital. He was Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at New York University Medical School, Associate Visiting Physician at Bellevue Hospital, Consultant in Internal Medicine to the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine of New York University Medical Center and Assistant Attending Physician at New York University Hospital. He was Attending Physician at Doctors Hospital and Attending Physician and Consultant to the Neurosurgical Service at St. Barnabas Hospital in New York City.

He served as chairman of the Criteria Committee in Internal Medicine of the New York County Services Review Organization (NYCSRO) and as a member of the Disciplinary Committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. He was an Associate of the American College of Legal Medicine and was a Life Member of the American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, and the Pan American Medical Association. He was a Fellow of the Academy of Medicine of New York City. While serving on the Board of Directors of the New York Diabetes Association, he gave numerous speeches on behalf of the Association.

His papers were published in various medical journals and in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences. He lectured widely on endocrinology, diabetes and other topics. Dr. Aronson has

served on the Medical Advisory Committee of Planned Parenthood of New York. He is a charter member of the National Organization for Women, and was the first Chair of the Board of NOW's New York chapter.

He held a B.A. degree from Cornell University and an M.D. from Cornell University Medical School. He interned at the Jewish Hospital of Brooklyn and served an externship in surgical pathology at New York Hospital, Cornell University Medical Center. In World War Two he served as Chief of the Surgical Service at Santa Tomas Hospital in Manila; he was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart and five battle stars.

While serving on the Comitia Minora of the Medical Society of the County of New York, he campaigned successfully to persuade the organization to simplify the names of both bodies. They became the Board of Directors and the New York County Medical Society. For several years he organized and chaired the Society's annual Careers Day for youngsters interested in pursuing medical education.

The Aronsons resided in Tappan, NY. Dr. Aronson is survived by a son Dr. Eric Aronson, a daughter Dr. Lisa Aronson Fontes, and three grandchildren AnaLua, Marlana and Gabriel Fontes.

The time and place for a memorial service will be announced within a few weeks.