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WEINBERG, Dr. Sidney

Dr. Sidney Weinberg, 72, created medical examiner post in N.Y.

The New York Times

Dr. Sidney Weinberg, the forensic pathologist who created the Suffolk County, N.Y., medical examiner's office in 1960 and turned it into a national showcase, died Thursday at Columbia-Presbyterian hospital in Manhattan. He was 72 and lived in Huntington Station, N.Y.

His wife, Diana, said the cause was congestive heart failure.

A native of Philadelphia who grew up in Monticello, N.Y., Weinberg, whose father was a lawyer, attended the University of North Carolina and obtained his medical degree from the University of Buffalo before doing his residency in pathology at Kings County Hospital in New York and serving as an Army pathologist during the Korean War.

By the time Suffolk County decided to replace its network of individual municipal coroners, often lightly trained political appointees, with a unified countywide medical examiner's office, Weinberg had spent six years training with Dr. Milton Helpern, the legendary New York City medical examiner, who was one of the first physicians trained in the demanding modern specialty of forensic pathology.

Within years after he stepped down as Helpern's deputy and became Suffolk County's first chief medical examiner, Weinberg had himself become a legend and a mentor for the following generation of pathologists.

By the time he retired in 1982, Weinberg had won such respect from the police that a homicide captain claimed the department had a 100 percent conviction rate as a result of Weinberg's evidence.

Weinberg was in demand as an independent expert in controversial cases across the country.

Weinberg, for whom the building housing the medical examiner's office in Hauppauge is named, stepped down in 1982.

Besides his wife, he leaves two sons, Steven Weinberg of Providence, R.I., and Dr. Frederick Weinberg of Princeton, N.J.; a daughter, Fran Weinberg of Manhattan; a brother, Dr. Morton Weinberg of Hauppauge, and five grandchildren.

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