

HONORARY GRADUATE

ARTHUR HAROLD RUBENSTEIN

Arthur Rubenstein was born in Germiston in 1937. He studied at the University of the Witwatersrand where his brilliant undergraduate career was crowned by his graduation with an MBCh degree in 1960 and the award of Medical Association's Bronze Medal for the most distinguished graduate of his year. He then went on to complete his internship and registrar training at the Johannesburg Hospital, after which he spent a year at Hammersmith Hospital in London as a research assistant in endocrinology. This set the stage for his future distinguished career in diabetes and endocrinology.

Returning to Johannesburg, he started the Carbohydrate and Lipid Metabolism Unit in the Department of Medicine, a unit which still flourishes. He left again in 1967 to become a research fellow at the University of Chicago. There he progressed rapidly up the academic ladder, becoming (in turn) Assistant Professor of Medicine, Associate Professor, Professor, and finally Chairman of the Department of the Lowell T Coggshall Distinguished Service Professor of Medical Sciences in April 1981. He held this position until October 1997, when he moved to the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York as Dean and Gustave L Levy Distinguished Professor, a position he still holds.

During his time at the University of Chicago, Arthur Rubenstein made some seminal contributions to research in the field of diabetes mellitus. Soon after arriving in Chicago he formed a close association with Dr Donald Steiner, who had just discovered pro-insulin, the precursor molecule from which insulin is derived. He collaborated with Steiner in developing this work further. In doing so, he established an assay for C-peptide, which is the connecting peptide released from the pancreas when pro-insulin is converted to insulin. The ability to measure this peptide has had a major impact on the study of insulin metabolism in a variety of clinical conditions. He also documented several families with mutations in the insulin gene and characterised these abnormalities.

Rubenstein has co-authored more than 360 scientific articles, most of them published in journals with high impact-factor ratings. In recognition of his research achievements he has received numerous awards. Among these are the Eli Lilly Award, the prestigious Banting Medal of the American Diabetes Association, and the David Rumbough Scientific Award of the Juvenile Diabetes Association. He has also served on the editorial boards of several leading scientific journals, including the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, *Diabetes*, the *American Journal of Medicine*, and the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Over and above his personal research contributions, Arthur Rubenstein has been instrumental in developing the scientific careers of many young endocrinologists, several of whom now occupy leading positions in academic medicine in the USA. In recent years he has concentrated on medical education and administration and, in his capacity as Dean of Mount Sinai School of Medicine, is playing an important role in shaping policies in

medical education. He serves on numerous committees related to the Board of Trustees, the School of Medicine, and Mount Sinai Medical Centre itself.

His standing and distinction have also been recognised by his peers who elected him President of the Association of Professors of Medicine and President of the Association of American Physicians, which positions he held in 1995-96. In 1989 he was President of the Central society for Clinical Research. From 1982 to 1997, he was Director of the American Diabetes Association: Chicago affiliate.

At a personal level Arthur Rubenstein is a modest and unassuming man with a wide circle of friends. He is a brilliantly lucid speaker on a wide variety of endocrine and medical educational topics and is in great demand at scientific meetings. He has maintained links with South Africa and has lectured at and shared his expertise with academic institutions in the country.

As an internationally recognised clinical investigator, teacher, and administrator, Arthur Rubenstein has added lustre to South African medicine. It is with great pride and pleasure that the University pays tribute to one of its most distinguished medical alumni by conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Science in Medicine *honoris causa*.