Noble David, MD
Bard of Neuro-Ophthalmology

Noble David, MD could as easily recite the sonnets of Petrarch as the science of neuro-ophthalmology. One of the progenitors of retinal fluorescein angiography, he produced groundbreaking experimental and clinical studies on the retinal circulation.

He was born in Jacksonville, Florida in 1927, the sixth child of Syrian immigrants. He completed his undergraduate study at Duke University.

After graduating from Duke, he entered its medical school at his father’s urging, although he was more inclined to become a writer.

After training in internal medicine, he took a stroke fellowship and discovered he was “a neurologist at heart.” After completing neurology training at Duke, he was planning to enter private practice. But Lawton Smith, MD, his classmate at Duke, unloaded “such a barrage of exhortation and suasion” that he agreed in 1962 to join the faculty of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and Department of Neurology at the University of Miami.

Outside his Coral Gables home, 2002.

He became a member of the incomparable roundtable of neuro-ophthalmologists that included not only Dr. Smith, but also Edward Norton, MD, Robert Daroff, MD, Todd Troost, MD, Joel Glaser, MD, Norman Schatz, MD, and John McCrary, MD.

For several decades, he was the chief of neurology at the Miami Veterans Administration Hospital. He established a potent research operation that included the eye movement laboratory of Dr. Daroff.

As a raconteur of neuro-ophthalmic cases—or anything else—he was unequalled. But his real passion was playing the cello. Strains of the unaccompanied Bach sonatas could be heard from his office at the V.A.

He retired from the University of Miami medical faculty in 2002 after a distinguished career as a clinician scientist. In his lectures and writings, he was the lyric poet of neuro-ophthalmology.