Earl S. Shraro, professor of Medicine and Nutritional Sciences at University of Wisconsin-Madison, died peacefully at his home in Madison, surrounded by his family on January 14, 2021 at the age of 92. He was a nationally recognized and influential researcher, scholar, and physician and, to his peers and colleagues, a cherished friend and collaborator.

Earl grew up in Omaha, Nebraska attending Central High School and Creighton University. He then went to the University of Nebraska at Lincoln for medical school. While a medical intern at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago, he met his future wife Anita Shraro (née Lien). In 1955, Earl and Anita were married in San Francisco where Earl was stationed with the Navy during the Korean War. After his honorable discharge from the Navy in 1956, they began their family in Chicago where he was a medical resident before moving to Madison as a faculty member in 1959. He retired from the University in 1997 after a meritorious 37 years of service to the departments of Medicine and Nutritional Sciences and the Enzyme Institute. His contributions greatly enhanced our reputation as an institution of higher learning and he rendered extraordinary service to the community, the state, and the nation in various roles over the years.

As a new faculty member, Earl initiated a series of investigations into the biochemistry of fatty acid metabolism that would progress throughout his career. His contributions to the field achieved international prominence and the more than 130 original scientific papers and numerous book chapters and reviews attest to his impact on the field. He was widely recognized both for his pioneering studies of the role of fatty acyl CoA thioesters in the regulation of cellular metabolism and his seminal findings on the hormonal regulation of gluconeogenesis. Earl obtained extensive grant support from the National Institutes of Health over the course of his career including the prestigious accomplishment of serving as the Principal Investigator and Director of the NIH-funded Clinical Nutrition Research Unit at UW-Madison. Also, as Director of the University of Wisconsin Clinical Nutrition Center from 1978-1993, he helped provide invaluable research and education opportunities to many students and faculty conducting nutrition-related research. His many contributions to the field of nutritional sciences were ultimately recognized by his induction as a Fellow of the American Society for Nutrition in 1999. This is the highest honor the Society bestows to recognize individuals for significant discoveries and distinguished careers in the field.

In addition to his remarkable success in basic research, Earl served effectively as attending physician at the University Hospital and Clinics and the William S. Middleton Veterans Affairs Medical Center. As attending physician, he directed the clinical learning of numerous medical students and staff. Later in his career, he took on the task of serving as attending physician in the Outpatient Obesity Program of the Clinical Nutrition Center. His extensive and conscientious service in that capacity was greatly appreciated by both his patients and his colleagues.

Earl’s expertise in diabetes and lipid disorders made him a valuable teacher at all levels of education. His extensive expertise in both clinical and basic aspects of nutrition led in 1971 to a joint appointment in the newly formed Department of Nutritional Sciences. In Nutritional Sciences, his teaching was primarily focused on the graduate program. He was an invaluable advisor to young faculty regarding the appropriate topics to include in a new intermediary metabolism class when the nutrition graduate curriculum was revised in the mid-1990s. For his
entire career, Earl was a valued and unfailingly up-to-date source of knowledge regarding metabolism and metabolic control. Twelve graduate students earned doctoral degrees under his supervision. Earl’s contributions to the Nutritional Sciences department helped make it one of the most prestigious research and educational programs in the country. He also provided invaluable service to his departments, the campus, and the nation during his career. One notable example was his service on the Metabolism Study Section of the National Institutes of Health.

Earl enjoyed the simple things in life; work, family, reading, having coffee with friends, the Green Bay Packers, and the NCAA basketball tournaments. He never really retired and continued to go to his campus office almost every weekday until COVID kept everyone at home. Earl was a remarkable, caring person with a heartwarming way of connecting to people with a smile and an unforgettable twinkle in his eye.

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