

In memory of one of the 20th century's greatest biochemists: Professor Sir Hans Leo Kornberg (14 Jan 1928 – 16 Dec 2019)

Professor Sir Hans Leo Kornberg, FRS was a British-American biochemist, the inaugural recipient of the Colworth Medal and an Honorary Fellow of the Biochemical Society.

Born in 1928 in Germany to Jewish parents, Professor Kornberg escaped Nazi Germany in 1939 to live with an uncle in Yorkshire.

He became a laboratory technician for Hans Krebs (of the Krebs cycle) at the University of Sheffield. Encouraged by Professor Krebs to continue his studies, he gained a PhD in 1953, and following some time in the USA joined Krebs at Oxford.

His early career focused on the glyoxylate cycle in *E. coli* and the emerging field of biological thermodynamics, with several papers published in the *Biochemical Journal* (<https://bit.ly/37p4Tdo>).

In 1963 he was the recipient of the inaugural Colworth Medal, a prestigious annual award from the Biochemical Society for outstanding research by a biochemist within 10 years of their PhD. He reflected on his award-winning work in this review: <https://doi.org/10.1042/bj0990001>

In 1990 he was elected as the first President of the Biochemical Society, a new role established as the Society evolved towards the end of the 20th century.

Highlights of his career include:

- 1960 Inaugural Head of Biochemistry, University of Leicester
- 1960–1975 Chair in Biochemistry at the University of Leicester
- 1963 Awarded the First Colworth Medal
- 1965 Elected to the Royal Society
- 1975–1995 Sir William Dunn Professor of Biochemistry in the University of Cambridge
- 1978 He was knighted for services to science
- 1982–1995 Master of Christ's College, Cambridge
- 1990–1995 First President of the UK Biochemical Society
- 1995 Professor of Biology at Boston University

He will be dearly missed by second wife Donna, children Julia, Rachel, Jonathan and Simon, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Sir Hans with members of the University of Leicester Biochemistry Department past and present in 2011. Left-to-Right: Dr Colin Jones, Prof David Critchley, Dr Ron Cooper, Prof John Schwabe, Prof Hans Kornberg, Prof Bill Shaw, Prof Bill Brammar, Dr Tim Harrison, Prof Bob Burgess. Photo by Colin Brookes.

