Walter E. Stamm, professor of medicine and former head of the Division of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the University of Washington, past president of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), and recipient of the IDSA’s Squibb Award and the American Society for Microbiology’s Sanofi-Aventis Award, passed away on 14 December 2009, at the age of 64 years. Walt made major contributions to the fields of urinary tract, sexually transmitted, and nosocomial infections—not only through the research studies he led and the physician scientists he mentored, but also in the role he played in developing new standards of care and therapies that revolutionized these fields.

Walt was born on 4 February 1945 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was raised in Portland, Oregon. He did his undergraduate training at Stanford University, where he graduated with great distinction; graduated cum laude from Harvard Medical School; and then did his internal medicine residency training in Seattle at the University of Washington. His infectious diseases career started at the then Center for Disease Control, where he worked as an Epidemic Intelligence Service officer in the Hospital Infections Branch in 1973. He was then appointed branch chief (1974–1976), where he made his mark by defining the important role vascular access devices play in hospital-acquired infections. In 1976, he returned to the University of Washington in Seattle, to work with Drs Marvin Turck and King Holmes; there he began his illustrious career in urinary tract and chlamydial infections. His work established the methods of diagnosis, treatment, and public health control measures still used in these areas today.

In 1980, he published findings from the first randomized controlled trial of the safety and efficacy of low-dose antimicrobial prophylaxis against recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women. This was followed by a landmark article on the diagnosis of coliform bacteria in women, detailing in a meticulous manner the correlation between the quantity of bacteriuria from a midstream clean-catch urine sample and the detection of organisms in the bladder. This article established $1 \times 10^7$ coliforms as the defining standard for a UTI—a standard that is used throughout the world to this day. In rapid succession, he defined the association between Chlamydia trachomatis and the acute urethral syndrome as well as the association between coitus and coliform UTIs. He devised the concept of short-course antimicrobial therapy for UTIs in women, developed the use of postcoital antibiotics for prophylaxis against UTIs, and demonstrated that 2 weeks (rather than 6 weeks) of therapy could successfully cure upper UTIs in women. These recommendations became and have remained the standard of care for physicians throughout the world, even now, 25 years later.

Walt’s laboratory developed several rapid and sensitive methods for detecting Chlamydia infections, and he adapted these for use in large epidemiological studies. He showed that antibiotic regimens with $\beta$-lactam antibiotics used to treat gonorrhea failed to cure concomitant chlamydial infections and that dually...
infected persons with untreated *C. trachomatis* went on to develop urethritis or pelvic inflammatory disease. In 1996, he published a classic article demonstrating the prevention of pelvic inflammatory disease by chlamydia screening; this article led to the development and implementation of the chlamydia control programs now present in the United States and Europe—programs that have markedly reduced the frequency of pelvic inflammatory disease and its associated morbidities. During this period, Walt also discovered 2 new campylobacter species, demonstrated the importance of corynbacteria JK infections in the immunocompromised host and of *Bartonella quintana* bacteremia in inner city adults with alcoholism, and proved the effectiveness of single-dose azithromycin therapy in the treatment of chlamydial infections.

Walt was a prolific writer. He authored >350 research articles, 92 reviews, >105 book chapters (including the sections on UTIs and *C. trachomatis* infections in Harrison’s and Mandel’s textbooks), and 11 books. He was one of the founding editors of the textbook *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. He was an associate editor of the *Journal of Infectious Diseases* from 1988 to 2003 and served on the editorial boards of numerous other journals. His honors were numerous: Phi Beta Kappa (Stanford University), Alpha Omega Alpha (Harvard Medical School), the Squibb Award (IDSA), the Achievement and Parran Awards (American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association), the Masaaki-Okoshi Award (International Congress of Chemotherapy), the Theodore Woodward Award (American Clinical and Climatological Association), the Sanofi-Aventis Award (American Society for Microbiology in 2008), the Alexander Langmuir Memorial Lectureship (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] in 2000), and the Edward Kass Lecturer (IDSA).

Walt mentored numerous students and fellows to be academic leaders. As division head from 1994 to 2007, he developed the Division of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the University of Washington from 25 to >75 faculty members. He was a major spokesperson for our field for >2 decades. He served as a counselor and member of the Board of Directors of the IDSA starting in the early 1990s and was president of the IDSA from 2005 to 2006. He was the chair of numerous guideline committees—including the Food and Drug Administration–IDSA Committee on Antimicrobial Trials for UTIs, the CDC National Advisory Committee on Chlamydial Infections, the CDC Sexually Transmitted Diseases Treatment Guidelines Advisory Committee, and the Institute of Medicine Forum on Emerging Infections—and was a consultant to the World Health Organization for its Program for Prevention of Antimicrobial Resistance. He was tireless in his commitment to the University of Washington, serving on numerous committees for the Department of Medicine, the School of Medicine, and the university.

These research and mentorship accomplishments are only a partial legacy of his extraordinary accomplishments. His real legacy is the example he set as a husband, father, teacher, and leader. Walt was accomplished in every field he touched. A star athlete in high school and at Stanford, he had a lifelong passion for tennis, which he shared with his wife of 42 years, Peggy, who passed away in June 2008. He also enjoyed traveling and fishing with his children—Hillary, Lindsay, and Andrew—and skiing with family and friends. Skiing in Walt’s tracks was a sure and elegant way to come down a mountain.

This listing of accomplishments reflects Walt’s ability to synthesize complex ideas, develop consensus, and listen wisely, but also to act forcibly and with reason. He was unique: a builder, yet a consensus maker; a passionate advocate for academia and data-based research and clinical care; a superb physician; and a gentle, yet firm, mentor. We have lost an icon in our field and deeply mourn the loss of his vibrant presence at our meetings and forums.