

Ketty Schwartz

1937–2007

Ketty Schwartz, PhD, died on December 25, 2007. A distinguished French medical scientist who achieved international renown, she dedicated her career to research into cardiovascular and skeletal-muscle biology and pathology. She was small of stature, yet large in intellect, diplomacy, and determination.

After earning her doctorate from the University of Paris, Dr. Schwartz received a certificate in Immunology from the Pasteur Institute. She was attracted to a career in research, and she collaborated with surgeons and cardiologists regarding organ transplantation.¹ Her early contributions arose from investigations into sarcomere proteins and isoform expression in cardiac and skeletal muscle. In the 1990s, when her focus turned toward molecular genetics in cardiology, her discoveries led to increased understanding of familial hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, congenital long-QT syndrome, dilated cardiomyopathy, and muscular dystrophy.²

Dr. Schwartz served as co-director of the biochemistry laboratory for the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique's center for the study of surgical techniques (1964–1979) and then directed the INSERM research unit on metabolism of the heart and blood vessels (1981–1984). Thereafter, she attained the directorship of an impressive progression of research units, and membership on important scientific councils and official committees.³ In 2001, she was appointed to the highest research-policy position in France—General Manager for Research, at the Ministry of Research in Paris—and she used the opportunity to influence the direction of French research. During her career, Dr. Schwartz won an array of national and international awards for her contributions to fundamental and clinical research.³

Dr. Schwartz's installation of multidisciplinary research teams extended beyond scientific circles—she routinely included patients, families, advocacy groups, ethicists, and funding agencies.⁴ These abilities added to the high esteem in which her colleagues and students held her. Her team-building efforts aided the formation of clinical and research networks in France and internationally.⁴

Cardiovascular research has lost a pioneer, a role model, and a great motivator. However, the substantial scientific and medical legacy of Dr. Ketty Schwartz will benefit cardiovascular clinicians, researchers, and patients for many years to come.



Ketty Schwartz, PhD

(Photograph courtesy of Département Information Scientifique et Communication Responsable, INSERM)

*James T. Willerson, MD,
President and Medical Director,
Texas Heart Institute
at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital,
Houston, Texas*

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