

## IN HONOUR OF NATHAN MANTEL'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

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When Nathan Mantel was born eight decades ago, biostatistics was still in its infancy. Many of the methods we use daily were the invention of a small group of statisticians whose pioneering visions created a field. Nathan was very much part of that group. His work, alone and in collaboration with others at the National Institutes of Health, revolutionized approaches to data analysis. Nathan saw problems clearly and solved them inventively.

In honour of a lifetime of achievement, *Statistics in Medicine* and *Controlled Clinical Trials* co-sponsored a session at a joint meeting of the International Society for Clinical Biostatistics and the Society for Clinical Trials in 1997. The purpose of that session was to honour Nathan for his seminal contributions to applied biostatistics and to highlight for biostatisticians both young and old the pivotal role Nathan has had in developing many of the methods that we all employ routinely in our analyses of biomedical data.

In honour of Nathan's 80th birthday, we are now publishing three of the papers from that session. The papers provide a glimpse into the contributions that Nathan has made to the field. The first paper, by Janet Wittes, describes Nathan's background. The second, by Mitchell Gail, highlights the insights Nathan has had in dealing with a wide variety of problems and his firm grasp of both the essence of the biologic question and the underlying mathematics of the statistical methods. The third paper, by Samuel Greenhouse, discusses some of Nathan's contributions at the National Cancer Institute.

The fourth presentation, by Sylvan Green, summarized Nathan's contributions to clinical trials. The discussant for the session was Marvin Zelen who synthesized the four presentations and led the audience in a standing ovation to Nathan and his career accomplishments.

All of us who participated in this session have been enriched by the often exasperating – but always invigorating – intellectual discussions and arguments with Nathan. His influence on the field is immeasurable, and his influence on those with whom he has worked invaluable.

We all salute Nathan on his entry into octagenarian status, we wish him well, and we thank him for his signal contributions to our discipline.