



Frank Talamantes 1943 - Oct 8, 2018

UCSC Professor Biology Emeritus

Frank Talamantes, Professor Emeritus of molecular, cell, and developmental biology at UC Santa Cruz, died October 8 in El Paso, Texas. He was 75.

A leading endocrinologist, Talamantes joined the UCSC faculty in 1974 and served as Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies from 2000 to 2004. After retiring from UC Santa Cruz in 2004, Talamantes moved to his hometown of El Paso, where he joined the faculty of Texas Tech El Paso School of Medicine as a professor and Assistant Dean for Research in 2005.

Talamantes received numerous awards and honors for his pioneering research on reproductive hormones and hormone receptors, and he was also recognized for his leadership on issues of minority education. A founding member of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), he served as President of SACNAS from 1987 to 1990. The American Association for Higher Education honored him for "outstanding leadership and contributions to education in the Hispanic community," and in 1998 he was named as one of the "100 Most Influential Hispanics" by *Hispanic Business* magazine.

In his research, Talamantes studied a family of hormones called placental lactogens and the growth hormone receptor, which play crucial roles during pregnancy. His lab elucidated the structures of these proteins and their genes, and investigated the factors controlling their expression during pregnancy. He also studied the effects of placental lactogens on target organs such as the mammary glands and investigated their role in breast cancer susceptibility.

Talamantes received his B.A. in biology from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, and his M.A. in biology from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. He earned his Ph.D. in endocrinology from UC Berkeley in 1974. Upon completion of his degree Frank moved directly to a faculty position in Biology and as a founding member of Oakes College at UCSC in 1974.

Talamantes is survived by two daughters, Margaret and Laura Talamantes, and three grandchildren. A celebration of his life will be held in El Paso on Saturday, December 1. For additional information, see the obituary below that was prepared by his family.

Frank and EA President Wipke exchanged [email](#) 7/8/2018.

Obituary for Dr. Frank Talamantes PhD

(prepared by his family)

When Dr. Frank Talamantes was born on July 8, 1943, in Los Angeles, California, there were still laws in place throughout the country to restrict where non-white people should sit, eat, drink, learn, play, and marry. The educational and promotional opportunities for people of color were dismal and limited. To be the first in his family to graduate from high school and attend college during these times was an extremely proud achievement and the first milestone in his long and successful career. In an interview with the Santa Cruz Sentinel in 1989, Dr. Talamantes shared that he was luckier than most because he had the “fortune to have a mentor and great role model, professor Dr. Henry Browning...who picked me off the streets and gave me an opportunity to work in a laboratory”. He was also mentored personally and professionally by Satyabrata Nandi, who was his Professor and close friend whom he met in subsequent years at UC Berkeley. The mentorship of these individuals made a huge influence on the scientist Dr. Talamantes would later become.



He was raised in El Paso, Texas and was a graduate of Cathedral High School (1960). Upon completing his BA in Biology from the University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas in 1966 and his MA in Biology from Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas in 1970, Dr. Talamantes pursued and earned a Ph.D. in Endocrinology from the University of California, Berkeley in 1974. That same year, Dr. Talamantes accepted a position as assistant professor in the Department of Biology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He was eventually promoted to Associate Professor (1980) and then full Professor (1984). In 2000, Dr. Talamantes was appointed Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies.

During his 30-year affiliation with UC Santa Cruz, Dr. Talamantes' research and contributions to the field of biochemical endocrinology would earn him countless awards including the prestigious National Institute of Health Merit Award Research Grant, the Endocrine Society's Sidney H. Ingbar Distinguished Service Award for 2000, and the Berson Lectureship, the highest award given by the American Physiological Society for his pioneering work on growth hormone receptors. Dr. Talamantes received the "Transatlantic Medal Lecturer" from the British Society

for Endocrinology in 1991. His laboratory also received numerous grants from the National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation. In 2005, Dr. Talamantes joined the Texas Tech University, Medical School staff in El Paso as Professor and Assistant Dean for Research Development. This position afforded him the opportunity to return back to his hometown to help establish El Paso's first medical school.

Dr. Talamantes received numerous awards and honor for his pioneering research on hormones and their receptors. Talamantes and his laboratory studied a family of hormones called placental lactogens and the growth hormone receptor, which play crucial roles during pregnancy. His lab elucidated the structures of these proteins and their genes, and investigated the factors controlling their expression during pregnancy. He also studied the effects of placental lactogens on target organs such as the mammary glands and investigated their role in breast cancer susceptibility. During his academic career, Dr. Talamantes authored 171 papers and 13 book chapters.

In addition to being a professor, Dr. Talamantes was a mentor to many students, particularly underrepresented, first generation college students. He served as President of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) from 1987-1990. Dr. Talamantes successfully obtained a grant from the National Institutes of Health to sponsor annual conferences that facilitated minority students meeting with prominent scientists and learning about education and career options available to them. In 1989, Dr. Talamantes received a national award for Outstanding Leadership and Contributions to Education in the Hispanic Community from the American Association of Higher Education. He was recognized alongside Jaime Escalante, the famous Garfield High School math teacher, who gained national attention for his dedication and success in helping a group of Latino East Los Angeles students excel on the national advanced placement math test chronicled in the hit movie "Stand and Deliver".

Dr. Talamantes was a member of several distinguished scientific societies and panels including the Council for the National Institute of Environmental Health, the Society for Biochemical and Molecular Biology, the Endocrine Society and the American Physiological Society and also served in various capacities including the United States Editor for The Journal of Endocrinology, a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a Fellow of the California Academy of Sciences. In 2002, he was appointed to the Graduate Record Exam Board (GRE) and the Minority Graduate Education (MGE) Committee Member. He also served as chair of the Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) Review Committee of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences.

To his family, Frank will always be fondly remembered as the larger than life father and Abuelo. He was generous, caring, funny, jovial, colorful, gentle and fiercely loving. His charisma allowed him to make strangers into lifelong friends. He listened intently to those who came to

seek advice or just needed someone to talk to. One could often find him chit-chatting with friends or colleagues, smiling, with a cup of coffee in his hand. He loved the Bagelry (garlic bagel toasted with albacore tuna), sushi, pan dulce, tamales, Indian food and caldo de pollo. Dr. Talamantes passed away on October 8, 2018 with loved ones by his side. He is reunited with his parents, Margarita and Francisco Talamantes, who preceded him in death. He is survived by his two daughters from his marriage to Frances Talamantes, Laura Talamantes and Margaret Talamantes (and their spouses Ricardo Pardo and Esau Berumen); three grandchildren, Eliana, Santiago, and Nayeli; three sisters, Norma Talamantes, Mary Ellen Cobb (Steve Cobb), Martha Acosta (Rudy Acosta, Deceased), and nephew Richard Pineda (Victoria Pineda). During his retirement, Frank enjoyed reading, traveling, emailing, attending concerts, UTEP games, nature watching outside his home in the El Paso Mountains and spending time with his children and grandchildren.

Dr. Talamantes was a trailblazer of his era. He will be remembered as one who encouraged, supported and motivated others through their educational and professional struggles. He fought injustices and inequalities that he saw around him. He used his success and personal hardships to inspire others, with the encouraging words of “you can fall on your butt several times and still pick yourself up again and again”. We can all honor the legacy of Dr. Talamantes by living and acting on the ethos of doing good for one another. He will always be remembered for his contributions to the scientific community and his commitment to encouraging underrepresented minorities to pursue higher education. His family celebrates his contributions to family and community by encouraging donations be sent to Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), www.sacnas.org , in honor of Dr. Frank Talamantes.