Progress in medicine, as in all areas of human endeavor, results from the inspiration and accomplishments of a handful of individuals who influence and enrich an entire field. In the natural sciences it is often possible to identify specific, concrete milestones and credit specific individuals with their achievement. In clinical medicine, however, the influence of specific leaders may be as decisive as in the sciences, but they and their accomplishments are more difficult to identify.

However, despite these difficulties, Charles K. Friedberg will always be considered one of a small group of pioneers who could be said to have shaped contemporary cardiology. Along with giants such as Mackenzie, Lewis, Parkinson, Laubry, White, Wood, and Levine, Friedberg will be remembered for his genius as a physician, teacher, author, editor, and statesman in cardiology.

Friedberg directed his unique talents toward the precise identification and solution of major problems in clinical cardiology, and he channeled his remarkable intellectual powers toward pinpointing, analyzing, and solving important issues. As personal cardiologist to countless patients he had few, if any, peers. As sole author of what rapidly became the classic text in the field throughout the world, Diseases of the Heart, as founding editor of "Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases," as Director of Cardiology of one of this nation's most distinguished hospitals, as Director of a variety of postgraduate courses and training programs, as Editor-in-Chief of Circulation, and as a key member of the most influential advisory bodies to the American Heart Association and the National Heart and Lung Institute, Charles K. Friedberg brought a clarity of thought that was unmatched. This unique quality allowed him to shut out the "background noise" and hear the "signal" clearly. A good example of his penetrating mind in action is the editorial introduction to angina pectoris on the pages which follow.

Charles K. Friedberg was a man of strong convictions and his views were sometimes controversial. Far more often than not, however, the passage of time proved him to have been correct. His influence as a physician was enormous and as teacher, author, and editor his impact on the world of cardiology was magnified many times. Few individuals have the capacity to enrich an entire branch of medicine. Charles K. Friedberg was one such man.

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