



Leon Eidels

May 25, 1942 - September 22, 2025

Leon Eidels was born on May 25th 1942 in Jersey City, NJ to Mary (Lourie) Eidels and Benjamin Eidels. He grew up in Mexico City and was educated in a private Jewish school (Escuela Yavne). He graduated from high school in 1958. In 1959 he was selected to attend a one year program at the Machon Lemadrichei Chutz Laaretz (the Institute for Youth Leaders from Abroad) in Israel. In 1960 he attended the University of Mexico; in 1961-1963 he was at UCLA, and from 1963 to 1969 he studied at the University of California at Davis where he received a BS degree (with highest honors) in 1964 and a MS degree in 1966 both in Food Science and Technology, and a PhD degree in Biochemistry in 1969 in the laboratory of Jack Preiss. From 1970 to 1974 he was a Postdoctoral fellow in the laboratory of Mary Jane Osborn at the University of Connecticut Health Science Center in Farmington, CT. There he elucidated the pathway of heptose biosynthesis of bacterial lipopolysaccharides.

In 1974 he accepted the position of Assistant Professor in the department of Microbiology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, TX. There, he rose to Associate Professor and Professor, and eventually retired (in 2002) as Emeritus Professor of Microbiology.

At UTSW he taught both medical and graduate students, and was chairman of the Molecular Microbiology graduate program from 1986 to 1998. In his laboratory he trained a number of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, including Harvey Pookah, Jr. who came and never left.

Leon's laboratory discovered the biochemical and biological nature of the diphtheria toxin receptor on human cells to which the toxin binds to gain illicit entry into the cell to kill the cell.

This receptor had been elusive and had been searched for over fifty years by many researchers all around the world.

In 1973 Leon married Eleanor Royster, the daughter of Frances (Claypoole) Royster and Vermont C. Royster, in a package deal that brought her two daughters Heather (8) and Shelley (5) into Leon's life. One of the best things that ever happened to him, as he used to say.

Leon and his family were members of Congregation Beth Torah since 1975. Leon was fluent in English, Spanish, Hebrew and Yiddish.

He is survived by his wife, Eleanor Royster Eidels, his daughter, Heather Hutton and husband, Dirk A. Kuyk III, his daughter Shelley Hutton Tarasewicz and husband, Dale Tarasewicz, and his grandchildren Rachel Tarasewicz and Eliza Kuyk.

Donations in Leon's memory can be made to the Graduate School of Biological Sciences, the University of California at Davis, Davis, CA. 95616, or to Congregation Beth Torah, Richardson, TX, 75080, or to the charity of your choice

Previous Events

Graveside Service

SEP **26**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Sparkman Hillcrest Memorial Park
7405 W. NW Hwy
Dallas, TX 75225

Tribute Wall



“ *It was a pleasure meeting Mr.Leon he made my day .*

Alma Wilson - September 25, 2025 at 10:34 AM