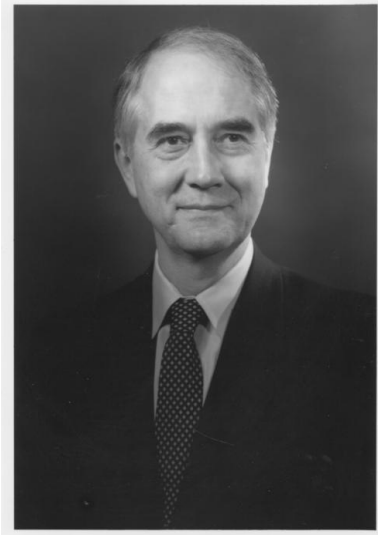


Distinguished Alumni Award

The 2020 recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award is Dr. Robert Neer, class of 1953.



Neer was active in high school, playing football and singing in the choir and the boy's glee club. He was also president of the Student Council and class president his senior year. In addition, he was a member of the National Honor Society, Science Club, the Math Club, and the Debate team.

After high school, he went to Harvard and graduated cum laude with a B. A. in biochemistry in 1957. He earned a medical degree from Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1961. From 1961 to 1966, he served as an intern in internal medicine at Bronx Municipal Hospital Center in New York City and a resident at Bronx Municipal Hospital and the Yale New Haven Hospital in New Haven, Connecticut.

Continuing his years in medicine, he worked as a physician, consultant and researcher at both Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University. That research looked into bone density and osteoporosis, studying the effect of diet on bone strength. He was also an instructor and associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School from 1968 to 1977, and from 1967 to 2013 he was associate physician and physician at Massachusetts General Hospital. In addition, he published several articles and peer-reviewed articles written by other researchers and colleagues.

From 1979 to his retirement, Dr. Neer served in various leadership positions at Massachusetts General Hospital including Director of General Clinical Research and the Bone Density Laboratory, and Director of the Endocrine Division. At both Massachusetts General and Harvard Medical School, he served on the Committee on Research, the Pharmacy Committee, and the Steering Committee on Nuclear Techniques in the Study of Metabolism and Bone. He served on many other committees at local, state, national, and international levels well as reviewing grants and participating in various editorial boards.

A high school friend, Leland Thornton, visited him in Cambridge and was impressed with his studies of the causes and treatment of osteoporosis at Harvard; Thornton saw this research as a way to keep "my wife, my daughters, and my granddaughters from breaking their bones."

Dr. Neer retired in 2013 and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.