INTRODUCTION OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL HERMAN BEERMAN LECTURER—DR. CURT STERN

RUDOLF L. BAER, M.D.

Dr. Curt Stern, our Herman Beerman Lecturer today, was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1902. He studied at the Universities of Marburg and Berlin and received his Ph.D degree from Berlin in 1923.

Dr. Stern started his research career under Max Hartman and Richard Goldschmidt. Subsequently, he worked in the laboratory of Morgan together with Bridges and Sturdevant. He was a staff member of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Biology in Berlin from 1923 to 1933. During this 10-year period he held two Rockefeller Foundation fellowships in the United States, one at Columbia University and the other at the California Institute of Technology. Subsequent to a visiting professorship at Western Reserve University, Dr. Stern in 1933 joined the staff of the University of Rochester where he remained for 14 years, the last 6 of which he was the chairman of the division of biological sciences.

In 1947 Dr. Stern became professor of zoology at the University of California at Berkeley and in 1957 he was also appointed a professor in the department of genetics. I will not go into the details of the many honors and appointments which have been given to Dr. Stern. Suffice it to say that he is a member of The National Academy of Sciences and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1963 The National Academy of Sciences awarded him the Kimber Genetics Medal.

Among Dr. Stern's early interests were the genetics of drosophila. He is well known for so many achievements that it is difficult to pick out those which are most important. A committee of Dr. Stern's colleagues selected among others the following: his analysis of the phenomenon of mosaicism; the discovery that the Y chromosome is divided in three portions with different properties; the demonstration and study of somatic crossing over; the uncovering of evidence for exchange between the X and Y chromosomes; the investigation of position effects; and the interpretation of isozyme.

Among Dr. Stern's other major contributions are his studies of human genetics. Dermatologists in general are fully aware of the importance of genetics in the area of cutaneous diseases and anomalies and I am sure that it does not come as a surprise to this audience that Dr. Stern's studies of human genetics frequently have dealt with the skin. Adenoma sebaceum, albinism, vitiligo, white forelock, woolly hair, xeroderma pigmentosum, ichthyosis hystrix, baldness, skin color and pigmentation and neurofibromatosis are among those entities which he himself has studied or which he utilized as examples in his book on the "Principles of Human Genetics". He is the author of a number of monographs and books which are part of the classics of the literature of genetics. His book on the "Principles of Human Genetics" has been translated into many languages and has been credited by many with having been a major factor in acquainting the medical profession as a whole with genetics and of having stimulated the introduction of courses in genetics in medical school curricula.

In any event, it is obvious from Dr. Stern's writings that he is very familiar with many problems which are of the greatest interest to us. Thus, he has chosen the topic "Adventures in Dermatological Genetics" for his Herman Beerman Lecture today. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you Dr. Curt Stern.