

Ralph V. Katz

Trinity Class of 1965

Doctor of Science

As professor and founding chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Health Promotion at the New York University College of Dentistry, you are known for your exceptional teaching and for your groundbreaking research in the fields of dental medicine and epidemiology. You have shown a deep commitment to ethics and justice both in this country and abroad, with much of your research focused on disparities in health care.

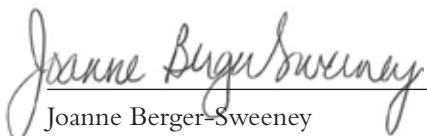
'Neath the elms of Trinity, you majored in biology and enjoyed membership in Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. You also played on the tennis team for four years and participated in Hillel. Your journey in academia continued at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, where you earned a D.M.D. in 1969. You then served for a year as an intern at the Dentofacial Deformities Center at the Tufts-operated New England Medical Center before moving to the University of Minnesota for an M.P.H. in dental public health and a Ph.D. in epidemiology.

You co-authored "The Tuskegee Legacy Project," a report that shined a light on the recruitment and retention of minorities in biomedical research studies, and you were present in the White House in 1997 for President Bill Clinton's formal apology to those involved in the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee. In 2001, you received a seven-year, \$8.3-million award from the National Institutes of Health to establish the NYU Oral Cancer Research on Adolescent and Adult Health Promotion Center. The center investigates why African Americans and Hispanics have a higher incidence of oral cancer and higher mortality rates from this disease than others. Your first published paper, written in 1976, focused on the oral health needs of those living in in-patient rehabilitation centers; 40 years later, you conducted a follow-up survey of these same individuals and uncovered no gains in access to dental care. This study and others led by you showcase the obstacles to oral health care for those who are homebound, whether because of advanced age or medical condition. You also have remained active in collaborations with faculty in Haiti, Puerto Rico, Sweden, and the Philippines. In 2015 and again in 2017, you ventured to Abu Dhabi to teach courses on ethics and public health at NYU's campus there.

You take pride in passing along your knowledge to future generations through the courses you have created, including one on the critical evaluation of scientific literature, which, according to NYU in 2012, was the only course of its kind in a dental school in the United States. You also developed a curriculum for teaching epidemiology to honors students at Hartford's Bulkeley High School. Outside of the classroom at NYU, you are known for the gatherings of your Spaghetti and Science Society, with a group of predoctoral students joining you at a Greenwich Village Italian restaurant to absorb "extra helpings" of science. You also are a prolific author, having penned more than 130 articles on scientific research.

From the early days of your career to more recently, your inspiring work has not gone unnoticed: In 1976, while serving as a major in the U.S. Army Dental Corps assigned to the Institute of Dental Research at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, you received the Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service. In 2012, you received the prestigious NYU Distinguished Teaching Award, the university's highest honor.

In recognition of your distinguished career and enormous contributions to the greater good as an academician and as a researcher, I have the honor of presenting you, Ralph V. Katz, for the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.



Joanne Berger-Sweeney
President and Trinity College
Professor of Neuroscience



Cornelia Parsons Thornburgh '80,
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