Without research, there is no hope.

—The Honorable Paul G. Rogers

The Honorable Paul G. Rogers (1921-2008), a highly decorated, 12-term member of Congress from Florida who was widely known as “Mr. Health” for his lifetime of service dedicated to public health and medical research, passed away on October 13 in Washington, DC, from complications resulting from cancer surgery. He was 87. He chaired Research!America’s board from 1996-2005 and remained active as our chair emeritus.

In his 24 distinguished years in Congress (1955-1979), he served as a member and later chair of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment. Rogers presided over the enactment of groundbreaking legislation that served as a model for decades for local, state and federal officials. Credited to his stewardship are more than 50 laws that have helped improve health care, the environment and medical and scientific research.

Rogers’ achievements benefited the lives of Americans young and old, from every corner of the nation. In his honor, in 2000, Congress designated the Paul G. Rogers Plaza at the National Institutes of Health headquarters in Bethesda, MD.

Among the many awards Rogers received for his work were the National Cancer Institute Award, the Albert Lasker Award for Public Service, American Cancer Society Distinguished Service Award, National Academy of Sciences Public Welfare Medal and the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases Award. He was an elected member of the Institute of Medicine and received 15 honorary degrees.

Among his extensive volunteer leadership roles, Rogers chaired the boards of the Friends of the National Library of Medicine; the Institute of Medicine Roundtable on Environmental Health Sciences, Research and Medicine; Scripps Research Institute; and National Osteoporosis Foundation. He was a member of the boards of the American Cancer Society, CDC Foundation, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Global Health Council, Harvard School of Public Health Dean’s Council and the University of Chicago Visiting Committee to the Division of the Biological Sciences and Pritzker School of Medicine.

Since 2006, Research!America has received $2.6 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation providing founding support for the Paul G. Rogers Society for Global Health Research, established to increase awareness of—and make the case for—greater U.S. investment in research to fight diseases that disproportionately affect the world’s poorest nations.

Rogers is survived by his wife Rebecca, daughter Rebecca Laing Sisto, grandchildren Alexandra, Cole, Lilly and Rebecca Sisto of Westfield, NJ, and brother Doyle Rogers of Palm Beach, FL, and 23 nieces and nephews.
REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THE HONORABLE PAUL G. ROGERS

“Paul Rogers often said that, without research, there is no hope. For the hope that research has brought to lives of Americans and people everywhere, the world owes a great debt of thanks to Paul Rogers. He was a role model and the epitome of public service whose optimism and tireless commitment to health research were the inspiration for generations of advocates. To those who knew and worked with Paul, the news of his passing is keenly felt. He will be long remembered as a champion of hope.”

—Mary Woolley, Research!America president and CEO

“Regularly consulted on the most sensitive and challenging of issues, Paul’s advice was widely sought and valued. Paul was the consummate example of both a leader and team player setting the standard for collegiality in his dealings with everyone.”

—The Executive Committee of Hogan & Hartson

“We have lost one of our true champions for biomedical research. His dedication, intellect and disarmingly warm style roped many successes over his long career. People around the world can be thankful for all that he did on behalf of public health.”

—Elias A. Zerhouni, MD, National Institutes of Health director, 2002-2008

“The American Heart Association is deeply grateful for the congressman’s exceptional contributions to the advancement of biomedical research, chiefly the doubling of the National Institutes of Health budget and passage of key legislation to improve the treatment and prevention of cardiovascular diseases.”

—M. Can Wheeler, American Heart Association CEO

“Paul Rogers often said that, in his dealings with everyone.”

—John Edward Porter, Member of Congress (1980-2001), Research!America chair

“Mr. Rogers did so much for health in this nation, but also for other areas. He was a great champion of the environment, also. His contributions and impact will outlive him for generations. What a leader we have lost—and one of the most gracious people I have ever known.”

—Christopher F. D’Elia, PhD, University of South Florida

“[Paul] effortlessly seemed to elevate our vision to what yet might be, whilst he elevated our hearts to what must become. With him, all seemed not only possible but urgently doable. … Paul’s expectations remain luminous and large, for he expects goodness and good work from each one of us—and we must not let him down.”

—Martin J. Murphy, CEO, Roundtable on Cancer chief executive officer

“He was an adamant advocate in Congress for what he believed was right and just, and health equity was chief among them: that all lives are equally valuable and everyone has a right to experience access to the best possible health.”

—Julie Louise Gerberding, MD, MPH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director

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“He was just a giant of a man. He once told me the best part about being in politics is not the politics—it’s the ability to touch people’s lives.”

—The Honorable Daniel A. Mica, Member of Congress (1979-1989), Paul Rogers’ former chief of staff

Visit www.researchamerica.org /rogers_tribute for more on the life and legacy of Paul Rogers.