Samuel Oleesky (7 May 1921- 20 November 2013)

M.Sc (Manchester) 1950, MD (Washington) 1949, MRCP 1946, FRCP 1963

Samuel Oleesky was born in Manchester on May 7 1921. the eldest child of Morris and Annie Oleesky. The families of both his parents were originally from Poland and had migrated to England in the 1860s.

Morris Oleesky was a Kosher butcher and Sam was brought up over the shop in Cheetham Hill, a cosmopolitan area of the City. He was educated at the Jews’ School in Derby St near his home and then, aged 11, won a scholarship to Manchester Central High School.

At the early age of 17 he won a scholarship to Manchester University and commenced there in October 1938. In 1942 he was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation Scholarship which provided a secondment to Washington University Medical School in St Louis Missouri where he remained until December 1943. He returned to the UK to complete his MB.Ch.B in Manchester in 1944. The journeys to and from the USA by boat were hazardous as U Boats were lurking and some of his contemporaries were on ships which were attacked.

He had a distinguished postgraduate career, qualifying M.Sc (Manchester) 1950, MD (Washington) 1949 and was MRCP 1946 and FRCP 1963. His early papers were covered wide ranging aspects of metabolic disease including diabetes and renal disease.

From 1944 he worked principally at Manchester Royal Infirmary and was in post to welcome Robert Platt who became Professor of Medicine in 1946. In 1953 he was appointed Consultant Physician at Crumpsall Hospital in North Manchester. He rapidly became one of the leading medical opinions in the North West retaining an interest in renal disease and in diabetes. 12 years later he was appointed as Physician to Manchester Royal infirmary, then the only Teaching Hospital in the City. He remained there until retirement in 1985.

In 1952 he married Dr Sheila Fay Dawson of Leeds. They had two children David (b1955) a physician and Anne (b1957) a musician.

Sam Oleesky had a clear and retentive mind. He was in his youth a keen rock climber and continued to love walking into his ninth decade. He had an abiding interest in classical music and was for many years Honorary Physician to the Royal Northern College of Music from which he later received an Honorary Degree. He was an active
member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, which has had strong links with Manchester Royal Infirmary, and of the Manchester Medical Society of which he also became President.

One of the best medical opinions of his age in the North West, he was deeply respected by all his contemporaries and junior staff. His integrity was a byword and his gentleness yet firmness an object lesson to clinical and nursing colleagues and to students.

Netar Mallick