



Barney S. Graham, MD'79, PhD
2017 Distinguished Medical Alumnus

Barney S. Graham, MD'79, PhD, has spent his career solving global health problems through innovation and collaboration. He is one of the first people called upon when a deadly virus outbreak occurs. Dr. Graham, now the deputy director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Vaccine Research Center, is committed to improving lives around the world through vaccine development and research.

Dr. Graham was a scholar from the start. He graduated valedictorian of Paola High School in 1971 before graduating magna cum laude from Rice University. After earning his MD from the University of Kansas in 1979, Dr. Graham continued his training at Vanderbilt University where he completed his internship, residency, two chief residencies, and infectious diseases fellowship. Not quite done with his education, he also earned his Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology in 1991 from Vanderbilt.

The subject of Dr. Graham's dissertation, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), has continued to be a focus throughout his career. Dr. Graham and his research group had a major breakthrough when they defined the atomic-level structure of the RSV fusion protein, leading to the production of a promising candidate vaccine now in clinical evaluation. Furthermore, the development method of this vaccine is being applied to the creation of vaccines for other emerging viral diseases.

Dr. Graham's expertise is well-known in the global community. When faced with fighting the Ebola and Zika viruses in recent years, the NIH and World Health Organization immediately sought Dr. Graham's help. He rose to the challenge and established programs to create and evaluate vaccines for those diseases.

Dr. Graham has empowered a generation of new investigators by sharing his passion with trainees. He mentors medical students, fellows, doctoral candidates and post-doctoral scholars. He hosts sabbaticals for visiting professors from institutions all over the world so they can work on public health issues.

Dr. Graham and his wife, Cynthia Turner-Graham, MD'79, were classmates in the KU School of Medicine when they got married just months before graduation. The couple has three grown children, Ebone', Daniel and Anne.

For his success as a medical researcher and dedication to protecting the global community from disease, the KU Medical Alumni Association is proud to honor Barney S. Graham, MD'79, PhD, as its 2017 Distinguished Medical Alumnus.