

Dr. Paul Alphonso Godley *1957-2019*



Dr. Paul Alphonso Godley, a devoted husband and father, was an extraordinary man, whose humble demeanor belied his outstanding professional achievements. He was a world-class medical oncologist, cancer researcher, epidemiologist, and Distinguished Professor of Medicine at UNC. A luminary in racial disparities research, Paul dedicated his career to investigation of disparities in prostate cancer treatment and outcomes and providing expert, empathetic care for prostate cancer patients. Paul departed this earth on Sunday, March 31, 2019, at age 61 years, surrounded by his family.

He was born and grew up in Detroit, MI with his parents, brother, and two sisters and graduated from Friends School in Detroit.

After graduating magna cum laude from Yale University, Paul earned his MD from Harvard Medical School and a Master of Public Policy degree from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He completed his internship and residency at the Case Western Reserve University Hospitals, University Hospitals of Cleveland and the Cleveland VA Medical Center. He subsequently joined UNC-Chapel Hill where he completed fellowship training in hematology/oncology as well as a research fellowship in cancer epidemiology, earning his PhD from the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health in 1993.

In his more than 30 years at Carolina, Paul made significant contributions as a clinician, scholarly researcher, and leader. He was deeply committed to the development of diverse scholars and was a role model and generous mentor to many junior faculty and trainees. The passion he brought to his multi-role profession was evident to all those who had the pleasure of interacting with him. His tireless dedication to his patients was evident in a profile for "The New Face of Cancer Care" exhibit in 2009 when he said, "I like working with young physicians and research trainees, but it's interacting with the wonderful patients and families in and around the UNC Health System that really keeps

me going. I've learned a lot from individuals facing difficult circumstances and tough decisions with resilience and dignity.”

Paul's leadership and accomplishments in the area of health disparities were numerous. In 2001, he became the founding Director and leader of over 100 faculty members to establish the framework for the UNC Program on Ethnicity, Culture, and Health Outcomes (ECHO). Using his training in public policy, strong leadership skills, charisma, and persistence, Paul created an infrastructure for engaging community members and cultivated inter-institutional and community organization partnerships that have yielded longstanding, productive research collaborations focused on addressing health disparities. In 2002, under his scientific leadership, the Carolina-Shaw Partnership to Eliminate Health Disparities was established (Project EXPORT), and in 2005, he established the Carolina Community Network to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CCN), designed to be “sensitive to community concerns while merging the strengths and assets of the community with the scientific and research expertise at UNC.” These inter-institutional collaborations served as the catalyst for countless future research studies as well as important sources of support for a growing cadre of health equity scholars. Paul's foundational work endures through the numerous publications, ongoing research funding, and racial equity trainings that are now occurring on the UNC campus and throughout North Carolina.

Paul was an accomplished academic leader, holding numerous roles at the University of North Carolina including: the Rush S. Dickson Distinguished Professor in the Division of Hematology/Oncology at the School of Medicine; Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology at the Gillings School of Global Public Health, Member of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, and Senior Fellow at the UNC Sheps Center for Health Services Research. Paul became the UNC School of Medicine's Executive Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs in 2011 and its Vice Dean for Finance and Administration in 2015. In 2017, he became the School of Medicine's inaugural Vice Dean of Diversity and Inclusion.

Nationally, Paul was recognized as a preeminent oncologist, serving as Chairman of the Data and Safety Monitoring Committee for the SELECT Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial, NCI/Southwest Oncology Group and on the North Carolina Advisory Committee on Cancer Coordination and Control. Paul was a recipient of the American Cancer Society Clinical Oncology Career Development Award. He was a member of the American College of Physicians, American Society of Preventive Oncology, Society for the Epidemiologic Research, American Society of Clinical Oncology, American Medical Association, and Associate Editor for the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

Above all, Paul was devoted to his family, a loving husband and caring father. Paul was a great listener with an infectious laugh. An avid traveler, he explored six continents with his family, creating memories that will last lifetimes. Paul was an amazing and passionate photographer, capturing his family and travels through his lens; and lover of *good* music, which in his view meant jazz.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Dr. Adaora Adimora, and children, Alegro N. Adimora Godley and Bria Adimora Godley; his father Alegro J. Godley of Sun City West, AZ; his brother, Bernard Godley, MD, Ph.D. and his wife, Fara Behina, MD of Galveston, TX; his sisters, Joanne Godley, MD, of Bangor, ME, and Beth Godley of Brooklyn, NY. He was preceded in death by his mother Juanita Fitzpatrick Godley.

A brief service will be officiated by Pastor Andy Thompson on Saturday, April 6 at 1 pm at World Overcomers Christian Church (main sanctuary)
2933 S. Miami Blvd
Durham, NC 27703

Instead of flowers, please consider contributions to:

The Southern Coalition for Social Justice <https://www.southerncoalition.org/donate/>

The American Cancer Society: <https://donate3.cancer.org/>

For those who would like to send flowers and or cards, they can be sent to

Walker's Funeral Home

120 W. Franklin St.

Chapel Hill, NC 27516

919-942-3861

walkersfuneralservice.com

In lieu of a repast, a full celebration of his life and accomplishments is planned in Fall 2019.