

# Noted VU scientist Chytil dies at 85

BY: MELISSA MARINO  
VUMC Reporter

2/12/2010 –

Frank Chytil, R.T.Dr., distinguished emeritus professor of Biochemistry, died Jan. 31 at age 85.

Born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1924, Dr. Chytil completed his doctoral degree in 1952 from the School of Chemical Technology in Prague and spent his early years in research at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in the Department of Physiology.

In 1964, after completing postdoctoral training at Brandeis University in



Frank Chytil, R.T.Dr.

Waltham, Mass., Dr. Chytil returned briefly to Czechoslovakia, which was under communist rule at the time. In 1966, Dr. Chytil, his wife, Lucie, and their children escaped the “paradise of communism” and immigrated to the United States.

Dr. Chytil came to Vanderbilt University as an assistant professor of Medicine in 1969, transferring to the Department of Biochemistry in 1973.

He became a full professor of Biochemistry in 1975 and a General

Foods Distinguished Professor in Nutrition in 1984.

For nearly 30 years, Dr. Chytil's research focused on deciphering how vitamin A works at the molecular level. In 1983, he and his colleague, David Ong, Ph.D., were awarded the Osborne-Mendel

Award of the American Society for Nutritional Sciences for their work on vitamin A metabolism.

In 1993, Dr. Chytil received the Lederle Award in Human Nutrition of the American Institute of Nutrition for his research on the physiological role of vitamin A in tissue development and maintenance, particularly in the lungs.

His research advanced the understanding of how vitamin A affects lung function of premature infants.

Dr. Chytil retired from Vanderbilt in 2000. In 2003, he published an autobiographical essay in the Annual Review of Nutrition — titled “Rough and Rocky Road to the Retinoid Revolution”- which detailed his research and his life in Czechoslovakia under Nazi occupation and later communist rule.

“Frank Chytil was a great gentleman and a great scientist,” said Michael Waterman, Ph.D., professor and chair of Biochemistry.

“He always served his institution and his colleagues in a distinguished way, and he will be greatly missed.”

Dr. Chytil is survived by his wife, Lucie, who worked as a research assistant in his lab from 1970-1993, a son, Frank Chytil Jr, and two daughters: Helena Chytil Bewley, and Anna Chytil, who is a senior research specialist at the **Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center**.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, Feb. 15, in Benton Chapel on the Vanderbilt University campus.

The family requests that, in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Monroe Carell Jr.

Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, to the attention of Marlee Crankshaw.

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Obituary  
Tennessean

**Frank CHYTIL Ph.D.**

## Obituary Guest Book

2 entries

*The Guest Book is expired.*

**Restore the Guest Book**

Frank Ph.D. CHYTIL CHYTIL, Frank Ph.D Born August 28, 1924 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, died January 31, 2010 after a short illness. He is survived by his wife, Lucie Chytil; son, Frank Chytil, Jr. of Nashville; daughters, Anna Chytil of Nashville and Helena Chytil Bewley of Birmingham, AL; three grandchildren, Jackson and Shannon Bewley, Frank Chytil III; and his daughter-in-law, Marcela Brissova. He was a Distinguished Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry at Vanderbilt University, where his research concentrated on Vitamin A. A Memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, February 15, 2010 in Benton Chapel on the Vanderbilt University campus. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, 2200 Children's Way, Nashville, TN 37232; Attention: Marlee Crankshaw. HARPETH HILLS FUNERAL HOME, 9090 Hwy. 100; (615) 646-9292. [www.harpethhills.com](http://www.harpethhills.com)

- See more at:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/tennessean/obituary.aspx?n=frank-chytil&pid=139644451#sthash.LzaUYX8F.dpuf>

Frank Chytil (jr) died in July 2014

Lucie Chytil died in June 2014