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## **UAB nutritionist Roland Weinsier dies**

**ERIC VELASCO**

News staff writer [slightly revised by D. Heimburger to correct a small factual error]

Dr. Roland L. Weinsier, a nationally acclaimed nutritional expert who directed the University of Alabama at Birmingham's nutrition sciences department for 11 years, died Wednesday.

Days before his death, Dr. Weinsier's 27-year career at UAB was honored in a special symposium by several international colleagues he had influenced and inspired, said Dr. Douglas Heimburger.

Too weak to attend, Dr. Weinsier was able to watch via a high-speed Internet connection that had just been installed in his Mountain Brook home.

"He was really moved by it and very grateful for it," Heimburger said. "It was a celebration of the life and the impact of this man. It was such a blessing that he survived until we could hold it."

Dr. Weinsier, 60, sat on several national health and nutrition panels, including the committee that rewrote the nation's Food Pyramid. His own weight-loss diet, EatRight, was turned into a popular program at UAB and a book.

He excelled at every phase of his career: medical research, teaching and patient care, Heimburger said.

"In academic medicine, we have a term for that: triple-threat person," Heimburger said. "He was really a quadruple-threat person, because he also excelled in administration. His research career even blossomed during his chairmanship, which is really an achievement."

Dr. Weinsier's research led him to conclude that much of the nation's problem with obesity is the lack of exercise. Americans come home from sedentary jobs and plop down in front of the television.

His theories about exercise and weight loss were reinforced when Americans stayed obese even after turning to low-fat and low-calorie diets.

Dr. Weinsier [built his research career further, and developed new nutrition research opportunities for others across the UAB campus, after he stepped aside as Chairman of the Department of Nutrition Sciences in 1999 to create and direct an NIH-funded Clinical Nutrition Research Center].

Dr. Weinsier's professional commitment was apparent when Heimburger and David Allison approached him about the symposium.

"His first reaction was, 'I don't want it to be a eulogy,'" Heimburger said. "He wanted to do it in a way that would benefit the department, UAB and its fund-raising. That was his typical way of doing things: 'I don't need the attention myself, but we can do it to achieve larger goals.'"

A service will be at 3 p.m. Monday at Temple Emanu-El in Birmingham. Staff writer Katherine Bouma contributed to this report.