Memorial service for Dr. Ettinger is May 24

A memorial service for Dr. Alice Ettinger, professor and chairwoman of radiology emerita at Tufts School of Medicine and a pioneer in the field of gastroenterological radiology, will take place May 24 at 11 a.m. in the DeBlois Auditorium of the Arthur M. Sackler Center for Health Communications on the Boston campus.

She died April 14 at a nursing home in Norwood, Mass. She was 93.

Ettinger taught radiology at Tufts for more than five decades, developed the School of Medicine's first radiology residency program and practiced at the New England Medical Center (NEMC) for 40 years.

Born in Berlin in 1899, four years after Roentgen discovered the X-ray, Ettinger received her medical degree from Albert Ludwig University in Freiburg in 1924. Following training in internal medicine and radiology in Germany, she went to work for Dr. Hans Heinrich Berg, who was internationally known for his revolutionary gastrointestinal X-ray techniques. He had developed a spot-film device, a machine that recorded a fluoroscopic image on X-ray film. When Dr. Joseph Pratt at Tufts' medical school and the Boston Dispensary, now part of NEMC, asked Berg to send one of the devices and an associate to demonstrate its use, Ettinger was selected. She boarded a steamer for Boston and arrived in 1932 with the spot-film device in her luggage.

This began Ettinger's more than 50-year association with Tufts and NEMC and helped to launch modern gastroenterology radiology in this country. In 1939, she became the first radiologist-in-chief at both the Boston Dispensary and New England Medical Center Hospital. Six years later, she developed the first Tufts radiology residency program.

In 1959, she became professor and chairwoman of radiology at the School of Medicine. After retiring as chairwoman in 1965, she continued as an active clinician and teacher at Tufts until her full retirement in 1985 at age 86.

She received many awards for her work, including gold medals from the Radiological Society of North America and the College of Radiology in 1987, and 13 teaching awards from Tufts students. She also established at Northeastern University one of the earliest X-ray technologist training programs.