

Dr. Anne Gershon graduated from Smith College in 1960. For as long as she can remember she always wanted to be a physician. She attended Cornell Medical School when women were openly discouraged from joining the medical profession. She married Michael Gershon in 1961, had a baby, Perry Gershon, in 1962, and graduated from medical school in 1964. She has long been interested in infectious diseases and vaccines. She began research while in medical school and took a post-doctoral fellowship at the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology in Oxford, where penicillin was developed, after which time she completed her residency in Pediatrics at Cornell. Following that she had additional training at NYU, where her research on varicella zoster virus (VZV) began. Her mentors included Saul Krugman, Albert Sabin, and Samuel Katz. Her work led to the licensure of the at first highly controversial live attenuated varicella vaccine. During her long career she concentrated her efforts on studying the basic virology, epidemiology, immunity, prevention, treatment of varicella and zoster. She came to Columbia in 1986 to found the Division of Pediatric Infectious Disease, and remained its Director for 28 years. Anne and Mike have 3 married adult children and 8 brilliant grandchildren. Her research on VZV continues; together the Gershons have discovered a new phenomenon, VZV infections of the gastrointestinal tract.