

[Richard W. Lippman journal](#)

LIPPMAN, RICHARD W. (RICHARD WILLIAM), 1916-

Richard W. Lippman journal, 1952-1953.

1 item (181 pages)

M-0222

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Richard W. Lippman, a noted medical researcher whose career was derailed by the anti-communism “red scare” phenomenon of the 1950s, was born on March 5, 1916 in New York City to Maurice J. Lippman, a physician, and his wife Freda. He was educated at Yale (B.S., 1936) and the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (M.D., 1940), where he graduated 7th in his class. Lippman did a residency at New York’s Beth Israel Hospital followed by military service during World War II. In 1948, he moved to the Institute for Medical Research at Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Los Angeles where his important work on kidney disease was supported by grants from the Guggenheim Foundation and the United States Public Health Service.

Lippman had long been active in left-wing medical activism including membership in the Association of Internes and Medical Students (AIMS) during the 1930s-1940s. He later was involved in opposition to nuclear testing and to discrimination in admissions at Los Angeles hospitals. In the wake of well-publicized hearings conducted in Los Angeles in the fall of 1951 by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigating Communist influence in the professions, Lippman and two other Cedars of Lebanon physicians were dismissed from their positions on December 28, 1951. Lippman, however, was never called before the HUAC.

Although Lippman initially retained his appointment at the Institute for Medical Research, the government contracts that funded his research were revoked during 1952 leaving him professionally homeless and in a financially precarious position. While he and other left-wing physicians formed the Committee for Medical Freedom to fight political repression in the medical profession, Lippman was unable to find another position until 1953 when he was hired by Montefiore Medical Center in New York City. However, when he learned that accepting the post required him to sign a loyalty oath, he refused and returned to Los Angeles. It was not until 1956 that he found employment, joining the faculty of the California Institute of Technology. There he did work on the chemical basis of mental illness, a study supported by the Ford Foundation. Lippman published many scientific articles and a book, *Urine and Urinary Sediment* (1952).

He died in Los Angeles on Dec. 26, 1959, survived by his wife and several children.

Sources:

Chowkwanyun, Merlin. “‘The Neurosis That Has Possessed Us’: Political Repression in the Cold War Medical Profession.” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, v. 73, n. 3 (July 2018), p. 255-273.

Strauss, Franklin G. and Leon G. Fine. "The Imposed Obscurity of Richard W. Lippman (1916-1959), Revered Renal Researcher and Physician." *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, v. 31, n. 12 (Dec. 2020), p. 2749-2751.

Lippman, Richard W. student record, Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons, A. C. Long Health Sciences Library, Archives & Special Collections.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: Typescript journal written by Richard W. Lippman, February 13, 1952-March 12, 1953, describing his dismissal from Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Los Angeles due to his leftism and his attempts first to be reinstated and then to find another position. There is extensive discussion of the reaction to his dismissal in southern California's Jewish and medical communities, especially among members and leaders of the Jewish Community Center, the Committee for Medical Freedom, and the Los Angeles County Medical Association. There is also much on his negotiations with the administration of Montefiore Medical Center in New York City for a new post there, his rejection of the loyalty oath requirement, and their final settlement.

LANGUAGE: English.

ACCESS: Open without restrictions.

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ADDITIONAL FORMS: The accession came with a CD containing a scanned copy (.pdf) of the original journal as well as a transcript (.doc) created by Lippman's daughter Martha Lippman.

PROVENANCE: Gift of Stephen S. Lippman, 2021 (Accession #2020.003).

LOCATION: Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Box 7, folder 12.

PROCESSING NOTE: Finding aid written by Stephen Novak, March 2021. The contents of the optical disk with generated checksum have been copied to the Health Sciences Library's network drive.

CITE AS: Richard W. Lippman journal, 1952-1953. Archives & Special Collections, Columbia University Health Sciences Library.

Subjects:

Lippman, Richard W. (Richard William), 1916-
Internal security – United States – History – 20th century.
Medicine – California – 20th century.
Physicians – United States – Diaries.
Radicalism – United States – History – 20th century.
Diaries.