

## EDITORIAL

# A tribute to Isaac Schiff, MD, Editor-in-Chief

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of *Menopause, the Journal of The North American Menopause Society*. Dr. Isaac Schiff has been the sole editor-in-chief since the journal's inauguration in the spring of 1994. We congratulate Dr. Schiff for all that he has accomplished.

In the opening editorial of the very first issue, Editor-in-Chief Isaac Schiff and Editor Wulf Utian promised, "*Menopause* will be as successful as the quality of the articles submitted. We encourage members of the society to submit to us their scientific publications and create from the outset a journal that is truly theirs. We also invite nonmembers to submit contributions, comments, and advice to this new forum, thus giving their ideas wider access and dissemination. We, in turn, will do our part to ensure that the journal is one of which we can all be proud."<sup>1</sup>

The first scientific medical journal devoted entirely to the subject of menopause was *Maturitas*, introduced in 1978 as the official journal of the International Menopause Society. Since the founding of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) by Drs. Utian, Schiff, and Kronenberg in 1989, Dr. Utian had been determined that NAMS should have its own scientific publication. The debate among the NAMS board members in 1992 and 1993 was intense. One contingent agreed that an independent scientific organization should have its own scientific journal. The opposing contingent thought that because *Maturitas* was struggling to fill their pages with high-quality scientific articles, there was no space in the medical literature for yet another publication. Moreover, as coeditor of *Maturitas* with Pieter van Keep, Dr. Utian had a conflict of interest. This was resolved by Dr. Utian's resignation from that publication in 1993, coinciding with the NAMS board's approval to go ahead with its own journal.

The next challenge was to find a publisher. Despite rejections from some of the big-name publishers, Raven Press agreed to publish *Menopause* and was extremely helpful in guiding NAMS through its conception and birth. The cover design and format were simple. There was already a well-known "green journal" and a "gray journal," so why not launch a "red journal?" The difficult task, however, was to find an editor-in-chief. Dr. Utian had agreed to be editor but could not assume the major responsibility for the journal and administer the society at the same time. Dr. Rogerio Lobo of Columbia University accepted the challenge of persuading Dr. Schiff, who was located at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University, to accept the huge responsibility

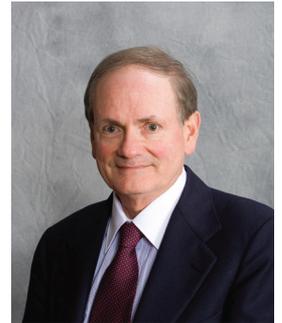
of being editor-in-chief. Whatever negotiating skills Dr. Lobo used are not known, but fortunately for NAMS, Dr. Schiff accepted and now has held the position for 20 years. Dr. Utian resigned as editor at the end of 2009 and was succeeded by Dr. Margery Gass in 2010.

According to Dr. Schiff, those first four issues were tough to fill, and panic set in not knowing whether the society and the publisher would have enough material to fill the number of pages needed to bind the issues. Luckily, through word of mouth and a few telephone calls by Drs. Schiff and Utian, they drummed up enough manuscripts to successfully fill the four issues of volume 1 at a grand total of 235 pages.

The journal continued to gain recognition, and submissions increased from year to year. In 2000, the journal expanded to six issues a year, and became a monthly publication in 2011. Pages published went from a first-year low of 235 to the most recent high of 1,427 print pages in 2012.

It was decided that the next big step for the journal was to have *Menopause* included and indexed in Index Medicus. On June 19, 1998, after a lengthy application process, Dr. Schiff received the news that the National Library of Medicine had selected *Menopause* to be included in Index Medicus and Medline. As Dr. Utian stated to Dr. Schiff on hearing the news, "Now is the time for a big push forward. Congratulations on your hard work." Under Dr. Schiff's guidance, the journal was well on its way to becoming the world's leading publication dedicated to menopause research. Since 2000, the first year for which impact-factor information was available for the journal, *Menopause* has consistently ranked in the top 10 cited journals in the ob-gyn category.

The journal continues to evolve. Its electronic version was made available through OVID in 2001, and publish-ahead-of-print articles were launched in 2006. The journal's website offers state-of-the-art links and contemporary features. An iPad app for the journal was launched in October 2012. This year, the journal began to feature more clinically based material in a new section called *Clinical Corner*, as well as an open-access option for authors who wish to make their articles freely available to all. Across 20 years and 15,000 printed pages, the journal has soared in ranking and in the number of citations (27,783 since 1994). During that time, Dr. Schiff has reviewed every manuscript and read every galley, often burning the midnight oil.



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Throughout these many years, Dr. Schiff has continued to uphold the high standards of the journal—accepting, on average, just 50% of all original materials submitted. He has relied on the ever-expanding editorial board for its wisdom, advice, and ideas for the future of *Menopause*. Dr. Schiff also relies heavily on the superb staff of the editorial office, who make sure that all operational aspects of the journal run smoothly. Each morning he meets with Diane Barker, Managing Editor, and Susan Keefe, Assistant Editor, who are located just down the hall from his office at Massachusetts General Hospital. That meeting begins promptly at 6:30 AM to set the agenda for the day, so it is best not to be late.

A review of the record of the journal during the past 20 years attests to the hard work, high standards, diplomatic skills, and deep dedication that Isaac brought to bear once he accepted the position. It is therefore with gratitude and ap-

preciation that we acknowledge the outstanding contribution that Dr. Schiff has made to NAMS, to the advancement of the science of menopause, and ultimately to the health and quality of life of women worldwide. Thank you, Isaac!

**Financial disclosure/conflicts of interest:** None reported.

Wulf H. Utian, MD, PhD, DSc, Founding Editor  
Margery L.S. Gass, MD, NCMP, Editor

## REFERENCE

1. Schiff I, Utian WH. A new scholarly journal on menopause. *Menopause* 1994;1:1.