

DERMATOLOGIC HISTORY

Hermann Pinkus – Influencing an Entire Generation of Dermatopathologists

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Hermann Pinkus was born in Berlin, Germany on November 18, 1905. His father was Felix Pinkus, a renowned professor, dermatologist, and dermatopathologist, who was a trail blazer in dermatology and poured decades of work into the field. Felix was known for describing the structure of the hair follicle and lichen nitidus. Hermann and his father, like many other Jewish physicians in the 1930's, were displaced from Germany due to the Nazi regime.¹

Hermann Pinkus graduated from the University of Berlin in 1929 and completed a majority of his training in Breslau, Germany. Dr. Pinkus then completed a fellowship in experimental cell research at the University of Michigan, and went on to complete additional training in dermatopathology at Wayne County General Hospital in Detroit. He established Pinkus Labs in 1944, which continues to be a well-respected dermatopathology lab. Dr. Pinkus became chairman of the Department of Dermatology at Wayne State University for a decade, where he had a lasting impact on the residency program.¹ In 1957, he pioneered a histological characterization of alopecia mucinosa. The fibroepithelioma of Pinkus, a variant of basal cell carcinoma, was also first described by Hermann Pinkus in 1953.¹



Dr. Pinkus described the eccrine poroma, which he posited was a benign tumor with a histologic resemblance to the epidermal eccrine sweat duct. He coined the term “acrosyringium,” describing a name for the epidermal sweat duct unit.¹ Additionally, Dr. Pinkus brought forward many more original findings and paved the way for future research in dermatopathology.

Dr. Pinkus was a founding member of the American Society of Dermatopathology and held the position of Vice President of the American Dermatological Association. In 1969, he published his textbook entitled *A Guide to Dermatohistopathology*. Dr. Pinkus' visionary textbook was known by many as the best dermatopathology textbook at the time of its publication.¹ Esteemed dermatopathologist, A. Bernard Ackerman, explained that although Hermann made a massive impact on the field himself, "if one considers both, father and son, no pair made more significant contributions to dermatology and dermatopathology than Felix and Hermann Pinkus."²

Conflict of Interest Disclosures: None

Funding: None

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