

University of Pittsburgh
Department of Chemistry
2010 Alumni Awardee



HELEN M. BERMAN (PhD 1967) Working under the direction of George Alan Jeffrey, Dr. Berman completed her degree in three years and remained at Pitt in a postdoctoral appointment as a National Institutes of Health trainee.

In 1969 Helen joined the Fox Chase Cancer Center, where she directed research on nucleic acid crystallography and the interactions between nucleic acids and drugs. In 1989, she joined the faculty at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey at New Brunswick; she is now a Board of Governors Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Rutgers. Helen expanded her crystallographic program to the study of proteins, including the structures of collagen and catabolite activating protein (CAP), while also developing structural databases and ontologies. As head of the Research Collaboratory (RCSB), Dr. Berman became the Director of the Protein Data Bank (PDB) in 1998 and a founding member of the Worldwide Protein Data Bank collaborative (wwPDB) in 2003. The wwPDB supports scientific research and education and is the essential PDB archive of information about experimentally-determined structures of proteins, nucleic acids and complex assemblies for the global community.

A member of the Study Section for the National Institutes of Health and an advisory panel member for the biological directorate at the National Science Foundation, Helen is a Fellow of both the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Biophysical Society, from which she received the Distinguished Service Award in 2000. She has also served as president of the American Crystallographic Association (ACA) and was the 2006 Martin J. Buerger Award recipient from ACA for her lifelong work in the development of global information services for the community of macromolecular researchers.