

(Gertrude) B. Elion

Written by volunteer

Tuesday, 01 October 2013 13:47 -



Gertrude B. Elion (1918-1999)

Gertrude B. Elion was born to immigrant parents in New York city. Her father came from Lithuania and her mother from Russia. She spent her early years in Manhattan where her father had a dental practice. When her brother was born they moved to Bronx.

She was a child with an insatiable thirst of knowledge. She finished high school and decided to major with science and chemistry. A great influence on her decision was the death of her grandfather, when she was 15. He died of cancer and Gertrude was motivated to do all she could to cure the disease. She graduated from Hunter College in 1937 and New York University (Master of Science) in 1941. And then she had difficulties finding an employment, because many laboratories refused to hire women chemists. By chance she found a job as a lab assistant. Even though she didn't receive the salary, she decided to work and gain experience. Later she had developed her skills in a major food company and laboratory Johnson and Johnson. In 1944 she was hired at Burroughs-Wellcome where she started her cooperation with Dr. George H. Hitchings.

