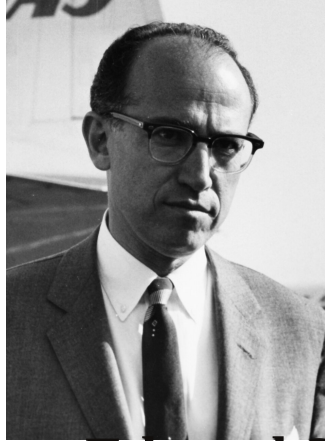




Jonas Edward Salk

October 28, 1914 - June 23, 1995

La Jolla, California

Jonas Edward Salk died in La Jolla, California, on June 23, 1995. He was eighty. Born in New York City on October 28, 1914, to immigrants from Russian Poland, he developed the inactivated poliovirus vaccine at the University of Pittsburgh and, on April 12, 1955, watched a country stop treating summer as a season that could steal a child's legs.

He did not patent the vaccine. Asked who owned it, he said the people. The line is famous; the laboratory years behind it were not. He later founded the Salk Institute on the La Jolla cliffs, a Louis Kahn building meant to look like a place thought could happen in public, and spent the last decades on other viruses and on the problem of how a laboratory should be organized. Fame followed him into those rooms and did not always help.

La Jolla is where he died. Pittsburgh is where the shots began. He is buried in El Camino Memorial Park in San Diego. The empty wards of midcentury hospitals are the quieter proof.

The 1955 announcement shared a calendar with Lincoln's death date, a coincidence the press enjoyed and he did not need. Children lined up in school gyms. He spent the rest of his life being asked for a second miracle and offering, instead, a campus and a method. San Diego is the grave. Pittsburgh is the debt. He refused to become a man with a single success. The Institute's courtyard still looks like a place an argument about cells could be had in daylight. El Camino is the cemetery. The empty iron lungs are the citation.

Services

Died in La Jolla on June 23, 1995. Interment at El Camino Memorial Park, San Diego.

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