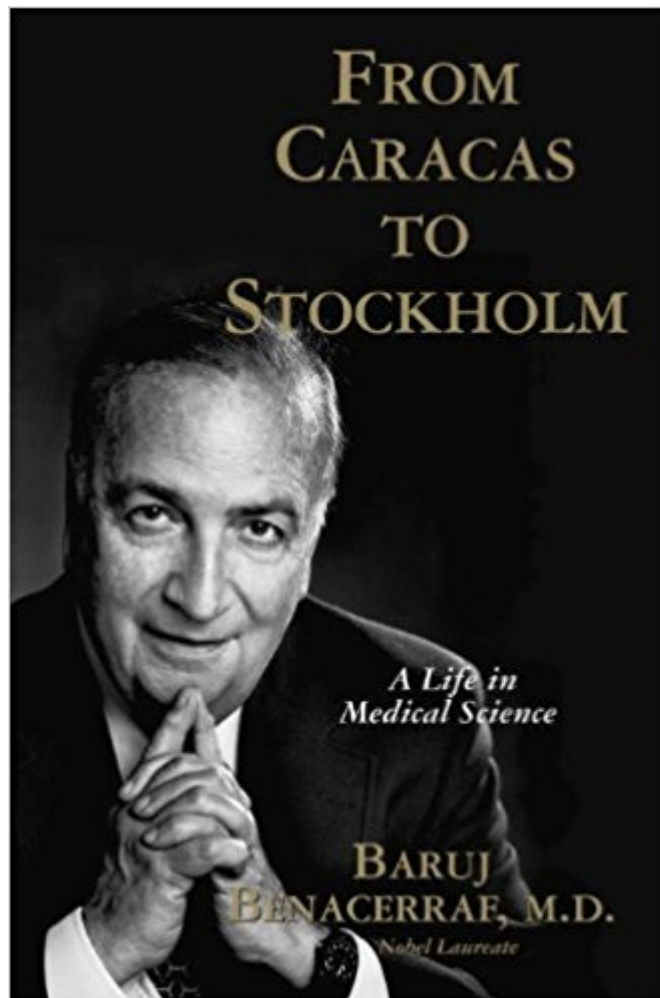




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From Caracas To Stockholm: A Life In Medical Science



Synopsis

In this delightful and often humorous memoir, Nobel Laureate Dr. Baruj Benacerraf discusses the colorful history of his family and how they shaped his values and goals, his marriage to life-partner Annette, and his career in medical research. He reflects on his decision to specialize in immunology, recent advances in medicine, the challenges of being chief administrator of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and the extraordinary experience of winning the Nobel Prize in medicine (with G. D. Snell) in 1980. Dr. Benacerraf offers valuable insights into the future of education in general and medical education in particular, both tempered with great compassion and hope for humanity.

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Customer Reviews

By the time Benacerraf received a Nobel prize in 1980 for his discovery of immune response genes, he had traveled a long way. Literally. On the road to success. He was born in Venezuela in 1920 to Sephardic Jewish parents from Algeria and Morocco. Benacerraf's childhood was spent primarily in Paris, until fear of war with Nazi Germany compelled his family to flee to Venezuela in 1939.

Persuading his parents to send him to New York that same year, Benacerraf attended Columbia University, beginning a peripatetic existence that lasted until he landed in Boston in 1969, where he has held prominent positions at Harvard Medical School and the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. In the meantime, his passion for medical research gained him numerous prestigious appointments and awards. In addition to chronicling developments in his personal life, Benacerraf offers up rather dry accounts of his most important research projects as well as his prediction for advances in cancer

treatment and his somewhat crotchety opinions on the state of science education today and the research grant business. Despite colorful early years and his impressive accomplishments, Benacerraf paints his life in a two-dimensional fashion and presents insights without enough imagination to sustain the average reader's interest for long. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Benacerraf, a 1980 Nobel laureate for his work in immunology, has lived in Venezuela, France, and the U.S. His autobiography is the fascinating account of a perceptive, forceful individual who can admit making mistakes and has no qualms about stating his beliefs. His discussion of the damage wrought on America by the 1968 student revolution is thought-provoking. As a Jew, he saw his applications rejected by top U.S. medical schools because of their quota systems (later he served on the faculty of two of them and turned down the invitations of several others). Born into wealth, Benacerraf was early exposed to the arts and humanities and later had a stint as a banker. Personal interests and good teachers led him to science and medicine and a successful career in laboratory investigation and medical administration. He writes clearly, with humor, and to the point, so that the reader's questions are answered in the next sentence or paragraph. A remarkable, appealing autobiography. William Beatty

An fascinating and interesting story of an amazingly bright scientist and innovator. Surprisingly very little about his quite famous philosopher brother, Paul.

I'm a scientist, from a Jewish Family, with some Latina mixed in, I really found this story fascinating. There's not that much science, it's quite personal and his rise is meteoric. It can't teach you how to win a nobel prize because it's so unique, but it is a good read, so if you like biographies, as I do, give it a go.

Very good. This is the second time I review it favourably. Please check your files and don't ask me anymore.

Benacerraf is a charming writer, but I was somewhat disappointed with the book. I was hoping to find some new insights into the creative process in science and some sparkling anecdotes about this Nobel Prize winner's colleagues. I did not find much of either.

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