Walter O. Spitzer (1937-2006) was Emeritus Professor of Epidemiology at McGill University and Editor Emeritus of the *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*. He was born in Paraguay in 1937 and received his Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of Toronto in 1962 and his Master of Public Health degree at Yale University in 1970.

From 1969 to 1975, he served first as Assistant and then as Associate Professor of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at McMaster University. In 1975, he was appointed Professor of Epidemiology and Health at McGill University, a post he occupied until his retirement in 1995; from 1984 to 1993, he also served as Chairman of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Following his retirement, and almost until the time of his death, he continued to engage in research and academic activities, to offer expert testimony to government and legal tribunals, to consult, and to serve on government- and industry-sponsored scientific advisory committees.