

Dr. Eugene Revitch, noted psychiatrist, 87

By JONATHAN JAFFE

Funeral services are to be held at noon today for Eugene Revitch, a nationally known expert in forensic psychiatry and the founder of the psychiatric department at JFK Medical Center in Edison. The former Edison resident died Saturday of heart failure at age 87.

Family members yesterday remembered Revitch as a compassionate psychiatrist and author, who was available to his patients at any hour of the day.

"My father was a caring doctor with great courage," said Judith Porter of Ardmore, Pa. "The police would bring him to talk with the most violent cases. He would sit in a room with them, without protection, and calm them down. No matter who it was, he always treated that person with respect."

Dr. Louis Schlesinger of Maplewood, who co-authored three books with Revitch, yesterday said his colleague developed a theory known as "conjugal paranoia," in which a spouse develops a delusion the other is being unfaithful.

Schlesinger said Revitch also was one of the first doctors in the nation to study the relationship between neurology and psychiatry. In addition, he was one of the first psychiatrists to study compulsive sex offenders, founding in 1953 the New Jersey Diagnostic Center, now known as the New Jersey Adult Diagnostic Treatment Center at Avenel.

Family members yesterday recalled that Revitch, a Jew born in Latvia in 1909, was forced to flee his native country in 1914 when the Russians thought his family were German spies. The family returned in 1920, and Revitch pursued an interest in medicine.

Revitch, who learned seven languages during his lifetime, attended the University of Montpellier in France and the University of Paris Medical School.

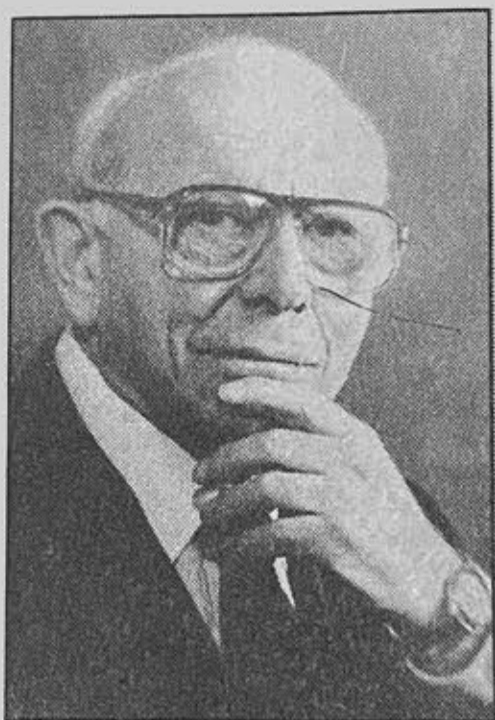
Upon receiving his medical degree in 1936, Revitch returned to Latvia to become a doctor, but was drafted into the army.

After serving in the Latvian army, Revitch realized, there was no future for a young Jewish doctor in Latvia, especially with Nazism spreading through Eastern Europe. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1938.

Porter said American hospitals would not accept credentials from a foreign medical school, and her father ended up selling Christmas trees and delivering prescriptions.

He eventually was able to land a job as a lab technician at the University of Pennsylvania. It was there he met Esther Tulchinsky, who he married in 1939.

Revitch's wife yesterday recalled that she mailed out 200 letters to hospitals around the United States, seek-



Dr. Eugene Revitch
Leader at JFK Medical Center

ing an internship for Revitch. The couple received only one offer, and he went to work at St. Peter's Medical Center in New Brunswick.

When World War II broke out, Revitch entered the U.S. Army as a psychiatrist and worked with prisoners in Fort Missoula, Mont.

After the war, Revitch worked at the Lyons Medical Center for a few years. He served as a consultant at Muhlenberg Hospital in Plainfield for about 30 years and worked at the New Jersey Diagnostic Center for 22 years.

In addition, he served as a clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Medicine and Dentistry-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in Piscataway and worked for two decades at JFK Medical Center.

Revitch's wife yesterday said he started a private practice in Plainfield in 1953, and relocated it to Edison in 1972. The psychiatrist retired nine years ago, and moved with his wife to the Martin's Run Life Care Community in Media, Pa. He was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease about four years ago.

"Even when he was failing from Alzheimer's, my father never lost interest in what was going on around him," Porter said. "He was a true European intellectual, who read voraciously, loved classical music and favored Russian literature. His intellectual curiosity is a precious legacy to me and his grandchildren."

Also surviving Revitch are a sister, Adele Honnigwill of New York; and three grandchildren, Daniel, Rebecca and Michael Porter, all of New York.

Services are scheduled for noon at Martin's Run Life Care Community. Interment will follow at Beth Israel Cemetery in Woodbridge.

Contributions can be made to the Alzheimer's Foundation, 100 N. 17th St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.