Former ABR trustee Dr. John Murray Dennis, died on January 17, 2013, of respiratory failure at Greater Baltimore Medical Center. Dr. Dennis was a national leader of radiology with the American College of Radiology and the American Board of Radiology. He was former dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, where his career spanned nearly half a century. He was 89.

“This is a very sad day for us,” said Dr. E. Albert Reece, vice president for medical affairs for the University of Maryland and dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine. “He was someone who spent many years at Maryland, and even in his retirement he continued to attend major events. He was very loyal and continued to be extraordinarily engaged.”

Dr. Dennis was born and raised in Willards on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. After graduating from Pittsville High School, he enrolled at the University of Maryland, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in 1943. He earned his medical degree from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1945, and after completing an internship at the medical school, he graduated in 1946 from the Army School of Roentgenology.

From 1946 to 1948, Dr. Dennis served in the Air Force, where he was chief of radiology at the Station Hospital, Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. In 1948, after being discharged with the rank of captain, he began his radiology residency at the University of Maryland, studying under Dr. Walter Kilby. He completed a fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania and was certified by the American Board of Radiology in 1951.

Dr. Dennis began his professional career the same year at the University of Maryland School of Medicine as an instructor in the radiology department. Two years later, he was named professor and the first full-time chairman of the department, and he remained in that position for the next 22 years. In 1973, Dr. Dennis was appointed acting dean of the medical school and in 1974 was appointed the formal dean of University of Maryland School of Medicine.

During those decades, Dr. Dennis expanded his department, added members for nuclear medicine and radiation therapy, and accepted a larger group of residents for radiology training. The University of Maryland rose to be among the top third of medical schools, as measured by research grants, during his tenure. An editorial in The Baltimore Sun at the time of his retirement in 1990 said, “He, more than anyone, is responsible for the construction of a new Veterans Administration hospital on the UMAB campus.”

In the 1960s, Dr. Dennis was chairman of the American College of Radiology (ACR) council and rose to
membership of the American Board of Chancellors. He became chairman of the board and then president of the ACR in 1976. In 1980, he received an ACR goal medal. Earlier in his career, he was an examiner for the American Board of Radiology and in the 1970s, served on the leadership of the ABR and its committees to improve its advancements.

In 1990, he resigned as the dean of medicine. Throughout his career, he lived on the north side of Baltimore with his wife, Mary Helen, and their four children.