



IN MEMORIAM

CUAJ honours its members and friends who have passed away. We invite colleagues of the deceased to submit brief remembrances. Please limit your notice to 200 words. Send your notice to journal@cua.org or fax it to 514-395-1664.

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Dr. Gerald Thomas Cook

Dr. Cook died on January 13, 2014. Born in Herbert, Saskatchewan on March 6, 1929 to Isabel and Thomas Cook, Dr. Cook is survived by his children Tom, Bruce, Barbara and Douglas; grandchildren Alex, Patrick, Kate and Charlie. He will be remembered for his medical career spanning 5 decades.

He opened the first hospital in Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan, and then went on to a residency at the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Centre and the Medical College of Virginia. In 1966 he was part of the team that founded Canada's kidney transplant program at Toronto Western Hospital. A urologist, Dr. Cook was also on the surgical staff at the Hospital for Sick Children, an educator at the University of Toronto and always a pioneer in his field. His upbringing in the prairies gave him a love of the outdoors that he enjoyed through his farm near Orangeville.

Dr. Cook had been a member of the CUA since 1968.

Adapted from Globe and Mail, January 25, 2014

Personal words from John Trachtenberg:

Dr. Cook was the true, "do it my way, or the highway" old time surgeon. Yet he was quick to modify what he had been doing for decades if he saw it could be done in a better way. He never obfuscated. He told it like it was to your face, never behind your back. He did not play hospital or university politics. Perhaps he could not. He was a very rapid, yet meticulous surgeon with enormous innate skills as a craftsman and filled with common medical sense that left his patients better off than the usual academic colleague he came into contact with. Iconic, but worthy of praise. He never wasted any of his time in scientific adventures that lead nowhere, but he was quick to question why you thought something might work better done in another way and to adopt it if it made sense to him. He could quickly understand what worked well and better, he would champion this new way even if no one quite understood why, and he would perfect what worked.

He will be missed. A dying breed of pure surgeon. I am only sorry I spent so little time with him, because although we were of different generation, backgrounds, and academic training, I admired his innate understanding of what had to be done surgically and his ability to get things done. I had the sense he felt grateful for a new generation to add some science to his day-to-day activities. He was a pioneer in kidney transplant surgery and did quick meticulous cases. He was a generous man always hosting large gatherings of nurses and residents.

Dr. Cook reminded me of the often "quoted surgeon who, after doing his twelfth pediatric open heart no pump blue baby failure, went on to do his 13th to success again and again. Asked what allowed him to walk so gently over 12 graves, he merely said "he knew it would work." A different era, a different man, they preferred to call it "the time of surgical giants."

He was quite an individual!

John Trachtenberg MD FRCS(C), FACS
Toronto, Ontario