

George Paulson Obituary

Paulson, George
1930 – 2019

George Wesley Paulson died at home surrounded by his loving family on July 25, 2019, two days short of his 89th birthday. George was born July 27, 1930 in Raleigh, NC, son of Jehu DeWitt Paulson and Grayce Caudell. On a Pepsi Cola scholarship he went north to Yale University, where he graduated with a BS in Zoology in 1952. He completed his MD at Duke University in 1956 (elected AOA), interned at Bellevue Hospital in NYC and completed his residency in Neurology at Duke. Following residency he served for two years as Chief Neurologist at Womack Army Hospital in Fayetteville, NC and returned to Duke as instructor and Chief of Neurology at VA hospital.

After a year as Kennedy Professor of Mental Retardation at Peabody College and Vanderbilt University, George came to Columbus to join the OSU College of Medicine, Division of Neurology faculty in 1967. He became full professor and was elected Teacher of the Year in 1971. That same year he became Program Director of Neurology at Riverside Methodist Hospital, where he enjoyed a decade of private practice and was chosen 1975 Teacher of the Year. In 1983 George returned to OSU as Kurtz Professor and Chairman of Neurology (1983-91). He was founder and first chair of OSU's newly created Department of Neurology.

His academic focus was in movement disorders, Parkinson's disease in particular, and he established a Parkinson's Center of Excellence and participated in numerous Parkinson's study groups. He played a key role in

developing therapies for Parkinson's disease and related movement disorders, which had been mysterious and untreatable. He also organized the first international Huntington's disease conference in Columbus, which mobilized the field to discover the disease gene. His interests, though, were wide-ranging and included Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, and mental retardation.

He published over 300 articles and eight books, including a history of the OSU College of Medicine (1998). He was a Fellow in the American Academy of Neurology (first vice-president 1985) and the American Neurological Association. He was Chief of Staff at OSU 1991-93. He served as a leader on numerous national foundations and boards reflecting his varied interests. He received a Distinguished Alumnus Award from Duke Medical Center, Distinguished Service Award from OSU, and a Teaching award from the Alumni of OSU Medical Center. He received the Distinguished Faculty Award from OSU in 2009 and the Harry LeFever Award for Neuroscience in 2006.

George is survived by his wife of 65 years, Ruth, whom he met one delightful summer working at Dorothea Dix Hospital; his sister Pat Gold of NYC; and five children - John (Barbara Hotchkiss), Erik (Kathy Merritt), Henry (Sarah), Chris (Diane Wiley) and Ruth Ann Castillo (Justin). George was particularly proud of his twelve grandchildren, (all without flaw): Thomas (Jordan General) and Rose Hotchkiss Paulson; Wesley, Luke and Kate Merritt Paulson; Claire Buss Paulson (Dan Thompson); Nick Wiley (Kelly) and Erin Ruth Wiley Paulson; and Grace, George, Alice and Annie Castillo. Throughout his life George enjoyed the camaraderie of groups and colleagues, including the Columbus Medical Forum, Medical Symposium, **the Kit Kat Club,** and Conestoga, and he served as president in each.

Thanks to his wife he attended many musical and art events, even the opera (a bit reluctantly), for which he served on the Impresario Board. After retirement he delved more deeply into his love for history, writing medical history books on a range of topics: Arthur G. James – Surgeon with a Dream, In Pursuit of Excellence -- The Ohio State University Medical Center from 1834 to 2010, Closing the Asylums, and The Presidents – Their Health and Their Medical Care. He believed strongly in the power of words and was a voracious reader and prolific letter writer. He took special pleasure as history scholar in OSU's Medical Heritage Center. In retirement he also continued his medical service, as neurologist for the Free Clinic and consultant at Twin Valley Behavioral Healthcare.

Aside from his family, far more than anything else in his life he enjoyed patients, the human contacts and the search for a correct diagnosis and best therapy. Indeed his dreams in later years were almost always related to patient care, and patient care was second only to his beloved Ruth, the joy of his life. Special thanks to the medical staff at The James Cancer Hospital and Hospice of Central Ohio.

Family will receive friends from 4-6 P.M. Tuesday, July 30 at SCHOEDINGER NORTHWEST CHAPEL, 1740 Zollinger Rd. Memorial service followed by reception will be held at 11 A.M. Wednesday, July 31, at Trinity Methodist Church, 1581 Cambridge Blvd., Upper Arlington. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Neurology Medical Education Fund #310809 at OSU Foundation 1480 W. Lane Ave. Columbus OH 43221; Medical Heritage Center Fund #305434 at Medical Heritage Center, 376 W. 10th Ave., Columbus OH 43210, or a charity of your choice. To share memories or condolences, please visit www.schoedinger.com.

Kit Kat Essays:

• Monumental Columbus (review of the statues in Columbus) (November 1994)

• Meals I Wish I'd Attended or Eat Your Heart Out Christopher Katt (November 1998)

• Alas! Poor Yorick, I Knew Him, Horatio… To What Base Uses We May Return, Horatio! Grave Robbers of Ohio (January 2001)

• Pale Horse, Pale Rider, Done Stole My Lover Away (January 2003)

• Time And Change Will Surely Show: A Century of Kit Kat, (Centennial Annual Meeting, May 2011)

Philosophy, Values, Dreams:

Attempt to be both competent and compassionate as a physician and useful and loyal as a man. Most recent efforts for the Medical Heritage Center at The Ohio State University.