

# GERALD EDWARD "JERRY" MCGINNIS



Gerald E. McGinnis, bio-engineering pioneer, inventor and entrepreneur, passed away peacefully in his sleep, after a long and courageous battle with Parkinson's Disease, on January 25, 2024, just a few months shy of his 90th birthday.

Jerry grew up in Ottawa, Illinois, a small midwestern town along the Illinois river. He began his mechanical engineering studies at the

Illinois Valley Community College. He then joined the Army, serving in the Korean War, to use the GI Bill to continue his education. Having earned his BSME from the University of Illinois, Jerry entered a work-study program at Westinghouse that sponsored his MSME at the University of Pittsburgh.

He began his career at Westinghouse in Research and Development. In 1963, he became manager of the Bioengineering Department, which launched his career in medical product development. In 1969, he joined Allegheny General Hospital as head of the Surgical Research Department, conducting research on artificial hearts. In 1971, he founded his first company - Lanz Medical Products - in his home. His first two devices were a ceramic anesthesia mask and a tracheotomy tube developed using his family's kitchen stove as a kiln.

His overarching goal was always the comfort of the patient. While developing his own company, he served in the Critical Care Department at the Presbyterian University Hospital in Pittsburgh, participating in programs to offer technological solutions to medical problems.

He founded Respironics in 1976 and developed the CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) and BiPAP (bilevel positive airway pressure) machines used for supplemental oxygen, infant apnea monitors, asthma treatment and hospital ventilators. As an entrepreneur, Jerry had learned first-hand the need to find the right problem to solve and the emerging awareness of sleep apnea disorder provided him with his ultimate arena.

Respironics became an industry leader in sleep apnea therapy and earned the honor of being named the 5th Best Private Company by Forbes Magazine, just before it went public on the Nasdaq Exchange in 1987. In 2007, the company he founded was the target of a takeover by Royal Philips Electronics and ultimately became Phillips Respironics.

Jerry is beloved for his humility and work-ethic. His philanthropy extended to the institutions that helped him along his journey, including the University of Illinois, the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie-Mellon University, and Allegheny General Hospital among others. He served as the Chairman of Point Park University as part of an effort to develop programming for his Respironics employees. He was a plain spoken, humble, honest, kind friend, father and mentor. He loved being with his family and lived his life with gratitude for the gifts given to him.

He was the youngest son of the late Joseph L. and Dora (Gress) McGinnis; and is survived by his beloved wife of 63 years, Audrey (Lanz) McGinnis; daughters, Alicia (Victoria) McGinnis and Megan Dayton; and son, the late Gerald Edward (surviving wife, Jean Remmy) McGinnis, Jr. He was the proud grandfather of Connor McGinnis, Emma Dayton, Joe Dayton, Manus McGinnis, and Lochlan McGinnis. Also survived by many nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents and son, he was preceded in death by his siblings, Dorothy, Ruth, Joseph Jr., Bruce, Betty, and Alecia.

Please join the McGinnis family for a Celebration of Jerry's Life at Oakmont Country Club on what would have been his 90th birthday, Sunday, March 17, 2024 at 4 pm.

In lieu of flowers, the family invites that donations be made in his honor to the Parkinson's Foundation Attn: Donor Services, 200 SE 1st Street, Suite 800, Miami, FL 33131 or at [www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org). Arrangements entrusted to the **JOBE FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY, INC.**, 445 Beatty Road, Monroeville (412-856-4747).

[www.jobefuneralhome.com](http://www.jobefuneralhome.com)

Send condolences [post-gazette.com/gb](mailto:post-gazette.com/gb)