

DR. MARK WHOLEY



Age 97, passed away peacefully, on Tuesday, February 25, 2025. Mark was a pioneer and inventor in the field of interventional radiology, who was recognized internationally for his contributions to the endovascular field through his inventions and his continuing foresight, vision and leadership.

As a young boy, Mark learned the importance of hard work by helping out with his father's fish business. He was born in McKees Rocks, PA and the Wholey family has been in business since 1912. His dad was a retailer, who started a few stores in Pittsburgh and then decided to open one concentrated fish business. But like any other cyclical business, they either had money or no money. Mark would joke "My brother grew up when they had money. I grew up in a down cycle." The fish business would become famous, but its success had very little to do with Mark. He said, "I wasn't bad, but I wasn't great, so I don't think the family was too impressed with me in terms of the business. I didn't think I was bad with the customers but my dad didn't think I was good. He said, 'You are not nice to the customers and you might think about another profession.' So my mother suggested that I start thinking about medicine."

During World War II, Mark enlisted in the Army and from 1946 to 1948, he was stationed at Fort Monroe in Virginia as a cook, technician and multigraph operator. Mark attended the University of Pittsburgh and then received his medical degree at Hahneman University in Philadelphia. His basic training was in medicine and he spent a year at Case Western Reserve. He then went to the Mayo Clinic, which was a superb environment for Radiology. At that time, angiography was just beginning in Sweden and he was able to land an NIH Fellowship in Lund, where he learned new catheter skills. This changed the course of his career. Shortly afterwards, he returned to Pittsburgh as Chairman of the Department of Radiology and Director of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology at Shadyside Hospital, where he introduced angiography and was a pioneer in interventional radiology, treating blood vessels with non-invasive balloons.

When he came back from Sweden, he was using a primitive angiographic pump injector, where the operator had to pull down on a large handle to inject the dye. It was a huge machine to use for the small amount of dye needed for injection. In Pittsburgh, he met Dr. Steve Heilman, a primary care physician and Mark gave him the idea to build a portable angiographic injector to put beside the patient to inject the dye. So they built the first functioning flow controlled angiographic injector, called the "Mark Series" flow rate controlled system. Unable to find a manufacturer, they eventually decided to form their own company. Today the Medrad injector is still the gold standard.

One of the real advantages of being in Pittsburgh was Mark's association with Carnegie Mellon University, where he worked with engineers, such as his long-time friend, Lee Weiss, in electrical, mechanical and biomedical engineering, for over 35 years. He transformed the biomedical industry with his entrepreneurial vision, creating many innovative technologies. The injector opened the flood gates within Mark and subsequently, idea after idea came pouring out, the next one being the transformational "Wholey" series of controllable and steerable guide wires, used to facilitate the placement and exchange of interventional devices, during diagnostic or therapeutic interventional procedures. The wave of creativity continued and he founded many other successful companies and developed other devices such as balloons, stents, stent grafts, a filter wire for carotid distal protection, etc. His work in the carotid system has been legendary. Mark had been a leader in interventional radiology for over 50 years, a respected voice in the international community and he received numerous honors and lifetime achievement awards.

Mark's love of golf kept him on the course at the Oakmont Country Club, regularly playing in the Oakmont Country Club SWAT golf game for many years and hitting hundreds of balls a day. He and Roseanne, his devoted wife of over 31 years, donated 1.5 million dollars to CMU to develop, "The Dr. Mark and Roseanne Wholey Laboratory Suite for Biomedical Engineering" that will help propel Carnegie Mellon University forward in fundamental discoveries and technological solutions. He also always supported Roseanne and their daughter, Lauren Rose Wholey, to help the people of Pittsburgh through philanthropic endeavors. In addition to golf and philanthropy Mark loved to travel, especially to the serene island of Maui, where he could truly relax with Roseanne and Lauren. Mark was predeceased by his wife, Nan Wholey, who died in 1987; and his siblings, Gladys Curran, Robert C. Wholey, Frances Gleason and Gwen Robosson.

Friends will be received at **JOHN A. FREYVOGEL SONS, INC.**, (freyvogelfuneralhome.com), 4900 Centre Avenue at Devonshire Street, on Monday, March 3, from 2-5 p.m. Funeral, Tuesday, March 4, Mass of Christian Burial, St. Paul Cathedral, 10 a.m.

In addition to Roseanne and Lauren, Mark is survived by four other children, Kirsten Perry, Mark, Michael and David Wholey; and nine grandchildren. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends and colleagues. In lieu of flowers, contributions in memory of Dr. Mark Wholey can be made to support the Wholey Biomedical Engineering Lab at Carnegie Mellon University, P.O. Box 371525, Pittsburgh, PA 15251.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb