

DR. BARRY L. ALPERT



Age 79, of Pittsburgh, passed away on April 1, after a courageous three and a half year fight against multiple myeloma. He was a pioneer in the field of cardiac electrophysiology and enjoyed a career that spanned more than four decades. However, it was his role as a loving, supportive and intensely devoted husband, father and (most of all) "Grampy" that he relished above all.

He was born in Boston and grew up in Laconia, New Hampshire as the oldest of six children. There he developed his lifelong love for golf, skiing and The Boston Red Sox. His academic achievements as class valedictorian led him to Harvard, where he studied political science only to realize his true calling was in medicine. He went on to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and complete clinical training in St. Louis, Boston and Philadelphia. His career trajectory was shaped by his inspiring mentors in the newly emerging field of cardiac electrophysiology. Previously deferred military enlistment led him to San Antonio as a Major in the U.S. Air Force, where he set up one of the earliest electrophysiology labs in the country. He was subsequently recruited to The University of Pittsburgh in 1978 to replicate the same EP lab as the first of its kind in the region.

Soon after his arrival in Pittsburgh, he met his soulmate, Judy Ruben on a blind date and knew he was ready to establish roots and create a family with her in his newly adopted home. Together, they lived an extremely full life that was always centered on family, filled with travel adventures around the world sampling the most exotic foods on the menu, Wednesday "date nights" and subscriptions to the Pittsburgh Symphony and Public Theater. Many of their fondest memories together were created during summers at their "Great Escape" in Nantucket-biking, exploring, doing jigsaw puzzles and hosting their closest family and friends.

After four years in the university setting, Dr. Alpert became the second electrophysiologist in the country to go into private practice. He joined the staff at West Penn Hospital in Bloomfield, which he would call home for more than 30 years. Dr. Alpert embraced his professional community of first-generation electrophysiologists and traveled throughout the world to exchange knowledge, inform drug development and develop procedural techniques that he then brought back to Western Pennsylvania. Among some of his many feats, he was the third cardiologist in the world to implant a defibrillator and the first in the area to perform catheter ablations and complex pacemakers. Along the way, he taught multiple generations of trainees and took immense pride in their success. Several became world-renowned in the field and collectively established Pittsburgh as an electrophysiology powerhouse. Patient care for him was everything and he emulated the bedside manner of his pediatrician grandfather to forge innumerable bonds across the decades, always hoping to understand those he treated as people, not patients. It was not unusual for him to come home with homemade gifts or recent vegetable harvests from his grateful patients, who loyally followed him to Shadyside, Forbes, East, Jefferson and Wheeling as the healthcare landscape changed. He retired in April 2021 just shy of his 76th birthday.

Fatherhood and Grandfatherhood meant infinitely more to him than his professional achievements and despite the long work hours, he always managed to be at Judy's side to prioritize family celebrations, little league coaching, countless recitals, family ski trips and Sunday night dinners. Among the most memorable experiences was taking the entire family to Israel to celebrate his 70th birthday. He took great joy in sharing a lifetime of diverse interests and making sure to cultivate several connections unique to each individual, from Premier League Soccer to U2 to Daniel Tiger. And despite never wavering in his Red Sox support and those memorable pilgrimages to Fenway Park with his son, he equally embraced Pittsburgh sports and cheered his teams to many championships over the years. Through family and work, he developed several meaningful friendships but he especially cherished his bond with his college friends, who rekindled their friendship during the pandemic with a virtual book club that has continued to bring several years of enjoyment.

Unfortunately, just months after his retirement, fate delivered him his final and most complicated medical case to solve yet-his own. He was steadfast in his determination to beat the odds, scouring the medical literature to review the primary data and learn of the latest breakthroughs. As the condition and its treatments took their inevitable toll, he continued to see life through his ever-present rose-colored glasses. Fighting through pain and ultimately paralysis, he relied upon grit, courage and determination believing the path to getting better required him to outwork his disease. Despite myriad symptoms, he never complained while cheering on the newest skiers from the bottom of the slope, pushing the stroller through Disney with his brace or completing one last European adventure with Judy, only to will himself to finish the photobook in his final days. He was fortunate to receive care from his tremendous medical team that was commensurate with the exceptional care he provided to his own patients.

Barry is survived by his loving wife, Judy; their three children, Lori Smolar (Benjamin) and Craig (Aviva) also of Pittsburgh as well as Joshua (Jill) of Portland, Oregon; in addition to six grandchildren, (Aaron, Zachary, Emma, Lucy, Noah and Andrew) in whom his memory lives on. He was preceded in death by his brother, Charles; and is survived by four siblings, Marc, Bess, Jonathan and Jeffrey.

Services at **RALPH SCHUGAR CHAPEL INC.**, 5509 Centre Avenue, Shadyside on Friday, April 4, 2025, at 1 P.M. Visitation one hour prior to service (12 noon - 1 P.M.). Interment Homewood Cemetery.

The family would especially like to thank Dr. James Rosetti (Hillman Cancer Center) and Dr. Jacob Laubach (Dana Farber Cancer Institute) and their respective teams and requests that all donations in Dr. Alpert's memory be directed to these profoundly impactful institutions. Hillman Cancer Center UPMC Cancer Pavilion, Suite 1B, 5150 Centre Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232 or Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, P.O. Box 849168, Boston, MA 02284-9168. In addition we are indebted to Dr. Nagib Manov and the outstanding Longwood team that treated him as a colleague as well as a patient and Ron Cardinale, who provided not only care but friendship in his final years.

www.schugar.com

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb