

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

JOHN W. HANBERY (1919 - 1996)

John W. Hanbery, Professor of Surgery/Neurosurgery Emeritus, died on January 14, 1996, after a long illness. He had been at Stanford almost continuously after matriculating as an undergraduate in 1938 and was a respected teacher, diagnostician and gifted surgeon. Dr. Hanbery established the residency training program in neurosurgery at Stanford University.

He was born in Enid, Oklahoma on June 11, 1919, however, his family then moved to Long Beach, California where he spent much of his childhood. He entered Stanford as a freshman in 1938. There he met Shirley Wendt, a Stanford coed, at a pre registration dance and later married her upon receiving his undergraduate degree in 1942. Three years later he received his Medical Doctorate from Stanford Medical School, which was located in San Francisco at that time. He participated in a residency at Stanford until 1948 at which point he embarked upon a residency in neurosurgery at the famed Montreal Neurologic Institute at McGill University. There he trained under the direct supervision of Wilder Penfield and William Cone, two of his role models. During his residency he helped improve the shunting procedures which were being developed to relieve neonatal hydrocephalus, a condition where there is an abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid. He also performed experiments to help determine safe and effective topical antibiotic concentrations to be utilized during brain surgery.

In 1954, Dr. Hanbery was recruited to return to Stanford as assistant professor of neurosurgery within the department of surgery. He temporarily left the full time academic position to join James B. Golden, M.D. in the practice of neurosurgery at the Palo Alto Medical Clinic in 1959, at which time he remained on the teaching faculty as a clinical assistant professor.

Through his determined efforts the Stanford neurosurgical residency training program was established in 1961. Hanbery was invited to be the inaugural Professor and Executive Head of the Division of Neurosurgery in 1964. During Hanbery's tenure as Head of Neurosurgery he trained 26 residents and countless interns and medical students. His residents benefited from his talent of teaching both at the bedside and in the operating theater. He was able to analyze the most complex surgical problem and dissect it so that his students could understand the solutions. He would lead a resident through delicate surgical procedures in a manner that allowed for the transfer of his surgical talents to the trainee. His former residents felt so indebted to their mentor that they established the John W. Hanbery Society in 1974 in his honor. This organization continues to be quite unique, in that residents ever loyal to their former chief meet each year in order to present scientific and clinical papers that can be discussed in an open and honest format.

John W. Hanbery, M.D., played an instrumental role in the development of heart transplant surgery at Stanford University. Dr. Hanbery helped in establishing the "brain death" policy at Stanford and in the community that allowed for the provision of donor hearts for the procedure. Dr. Hanbery volunteered to testify in court regarding the irreversible nature of brain death that helped the legal community accept the practice of using hearts from patients who had sustained severe brain injury.

Upon his retirement as Head of the Neurosurgical Unit in 1989, he opened an office on Welch road in order to continue work as a private consultant and to be available to many of his former students for advice concerning challenging clinical problems. He became Emeritus Professor shortly thereafter.

At the 50th reunion of his medical class of 1945, Jake Hanbery was voted the most distinguished of the alumni.

Jake and Shirley traveled extensively throughout the world. They especially enjoyed trips with the Stanford Committee on Art. Besides neurosurgery he studied and collected a library of the works of author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The detective work of Sherlock Holmes captured the interest of his inquisitive and logical mind.

John Hanbery is survived by Shirley Wendt Hanbery of Atherton; daughters Carol MacKay of Austin, Texas, Janet Hanbery MacKenzie of Atherton, and Lynn Hanbery Fuller of Albany; a son John Hanbery of San Francisco; a sister, Virginia Dickie of Long Beach; and five grandchildren.

Lawrence Schuer, Chair
George Koenig
Gary Steinberg