

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

JAMES THEODORE, MD

(1935-2003)

The Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine and the Department of Medicine lost a beloved friend and colleague with the death of James Theodore, MD on August 17, 2003, at the age of 67. He died at his home surrounded by his wife, family, and a few dear friends, after a short but fierce battle with cancer.

Jim Theodore was a pioneer in the field of heart-lung and lung transplantation; he made lasting contributions and earned an international reputation in the scientific community as a result of his early and enduring work in the field. He also left a legacy of his work and his life in this university, where he was a dedicated and tireless physician, teacher, mentor, administrator, scientist, and scholar. In all endeavors he was selfless, honest, fair, caring, unassuming, straightforward and down-to-earth.

Jim Theodore was born in Wilmerding, Pennsylvania on August 28, 1935, and he was very proud of his blue-collar roots. He was an All-American football player in high school, and a star halfback at the University of Pittsburgh where he received a Varsity Letter Award of Distinction. He was, in fact, sought after by 61 universities because of his outstanding football talents, and was awarded a full 8-year scholarship to the University of Pittsburgh to fund both his undergraduate education and his medical school education. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1958, and earned his M.D. degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in 1962. While in medical school, he married his childhood sweetheart and lifelong best friend, Gale McIntyre (Theodore), on March 30, 1961. He went on to internship and residency training at the University of Pittsburgh Health Center Hospitals and at Barnes Hospital at Washington University in St. Louis, and was an NIH research fellow in the pulmonary division at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. His early investigation was focused on basic lung biology, bioenergetics and ion transport. Following his formal training, he served as a Major in the United States Air Force, and was awarded the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service. While in the Air Force he continued his scientific career in the 6570th Aerospace Medical Research Lab at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

Jim left the Air Force in 1970 to begin his illustrious career at Stanford, where he spent the next 33 years helping to build a strong Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, and a world renowned Heart-Lung and Lung Transplantation Program. He soon found himself in the role of Chief of the Division of Respiratory Medicine while still an Assistant Professor, and he served in that role until 1982. He rose through the ranks and achieved tenure in 1977. His scholarship earned him NIH support, and numerous grants, including a Pulmonary Academic Award, a Pulmonary Division Fellowship Training Grant, and two Program Project Grants in Clinical Heart and Heart-Lung Transplantation.

Devoted to the art and the science of lung and heart-lung transplantation, Jim spent most of his career at Stanford dedicated to the Heart- Lung and Lung Transplantation

Program. He was the director of the program until his formal retirement in 2001, although retirement did little to diminish his involvement in the transplant program, where he continued to care for patients and provide sage advice. He made lasting contributions to the science of heart-lung and lung transplantation, and was the first investigator to describe obliterative bronchiolitis as the rejection syndrome associated with lung transplantation. He was the author of dozens of articles, book chapters, and editorials describing various aspects of transplantation, and was an invited lecturer nationally and internationally.

As a physician, Jim Theodore was astute, gregarious, humble, compassionate, and generous with his time, his energy, and his wealth of knowledge. Medicine was more than a career for him -- it was a vocation. Patients loved him, and came to him for care, advice, and even for an occasional hug. New patients who came to Stanford hoping to get a life-saving lung transplant knew him by reputation. The transplant community is small, and transplant patients talk to each other. Jim had a knack for delivering both good news and bad news that made patients seek him out. For years, Jim was the only member of the medical transplant team, and he devoted his life to making the transplant program one of the most successful heart-lung and lung transplant programs in the world. Patients come to Stanford from all over the country because of the reputation that Jim fought to build.

His generosity and energy were not limited to patient care, however. He served on and chaired numerous intramural and extramural committees throughout his career, and rarely knew how to say “no” when asked to take on more responsibilities. In spite of his busy schedule, Jim was a friend to anyone, regardless of his or her position in the hierarchy of the university or the hospital. He was equally considerate and kind to colleagues, to nurses, to technicians, and to housekeepers.

As a family man, he and Gale raised four children, Laurel, Terry, Rodney, and Brian, each successful in their own right, and had seven grandchildren. His family knew him as a loving husband and father, a devoted physician who worked much too hard, and a die-hard football fan.

Jim accomplished what few can hope to do. He made a lasting mark on the world -- not only on his corner of the world, but also on the burgeoning world of heart-lung and lung transplantation. He loved life and was not willing to give it up without a bitter fight. Sadly, he lost his fight, only days before his 68th birthday. He is sorely missed, and he will live on in the memories of those who knew him for decades to come.

Committee:
Thomas Raffin, MD *chair*
Ann Weinacker, MD
Jose Maldonado, MD