

Special Feature

In Memoriam—James S. Wolf

T. E. Starzl and R. Shapiro*

Surgery-Division of Transplantation University of Pittsburgh, Thomas E. Starzl Transplant Institute, 3459 Fifth Ave, UPMC Montefiore 7S, Pittsburgh, PA

*Corresponding author: Ron Shapiro, shapiror@upmc.edu

Received 17 September 2007, accepted for publication 17 September 2007

Dr. James S. Wolf, Sr., one of the first generation kidney transplantation pioneers, died on August 6, 2007, at the age of 72 years. After receiving an M.D. from the University of Illinois in 1961, he went to the Medical College of Virginia (Richmond) for his surgical residency. There, Dave Hume had assumed the chairmanship of surgery in 1956, and after 5 years was on the eve of launching one of the 3 kidney transplant centers that were functioning in the United States in early 1962 (Boston, Denver and Richmond).

Beginning in July 1961 as an intern and then a resident, and after his appointment to the faculty, Dr. Wolf remained in Richmond until 1976. Rising through the ranks to Professor, he was the 'quiet one' of the Hume school of transplantation. His dignified demeanor and thoughtful comments provided a startling contrast to his chief, Hume, who was viewed by some as a looming human buzz saw directed at them. Yet, both men had a kindly disposition, were extremely well liked, and were known for their integrity. It was one of those couplings in which by some catalytic event, one plus one equaled three.

Jim Wolf's name was linked for 15 years with other members of the founding Hume tradition of transplantation: H.M. Lee, Charles Zukoski, H.M. Kauffman, Richard Egdahl, John Mannick, Mel Williams and others whose careers blossomed. These men developed more than the principles and practice of renal transplantation. The concept of organ sharing came from them with the forerunner of the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS): i.e. the Southeastern Organ Procurement Foundation (SEOPF).

Through public and professional education, Jim Wolf was a tireless proponent of deceased donor donation. When the Organ Transplant Act of 1983 empowered UNOS, he quite naturally was one of the UNOS founders. He served as Treasurer in 1987–88, President in 1990–91 and Direc-



Dr. James S. Wolf

tor of Medical Affairs from 1994 to 2000. Throughout his professional life, he dedicated his efforts to public education in support of organ donation. He founded and became the first president of Coalition on Donation (today called Donate Life America) in 1992. The 'Dr. James S. Wolf Courage Award' was established in 1999 to recognize individuals who have played a significant national role in educating the public about organ and tissue donation.

Although Dr. Wolf's public image slowly became that of an administrator, he always was a surgical teacher. From 1968 to 1976, he was Chief of Surgery at the university-affiliated Stuart McGuire Veterans Administration Hospital in Richmond. Moving now to Chicago, he served between 1976 and 1994 at Northwestern University as Professor of Surgery (and chief of transplantation). After a heart attack, he modified his lifestyle and became a much-loved

Starzl and Shapiro

Associate Dean of Medical Education. In 2001, he received a heart transplant at the Texas Heart Institute. It was a fitting reward for all he had done.

No one ever had a harsh word to say about Jim Wolf, who was known to his family as 'Grandoc'. He taught Bible Study, was a horseman of international standing and had

a passion for sailing. In 1998, he participated in the U.S. transplant games along with other transplant recipients. Dr. Wolf is survived by his loving wife Majorie, two sons Stuart and Larry and his daughter Anneliza. He had eight grandchildren, four brothers and one sister. Neither they nor any other person who knew this fine man will ever forget him.