

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS THOMAS C. MEYER

Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics Dr. Thomas C. Meyer died at age 85 on July 16, 2012, in Madison.

Tom Meyer obtained his undergraduate medical training in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he was born in 1926, the son of a prominent ophthalmologist. This initial training was interrupted by a period spent in the South African naval forces in World War II. He obtained his medical degree from Witwatersrand University in 1950.

Following completion of medical school, Tom spent two years in an internship in Johannesburg and three months as a primary care physician to black laborers working in a South African gold mine before moving to Birmingham, England for post-graduate training in pediatrics. It was there that he met his future wife, Dr. Irene Ibler, also a South African.

In Birmingham, Dr. Meyer worked with experts caring for premature infants before moving to North America for graduate medical education in cardiology and neurology at Johns Hopkins Hospital and the University of Saskatchewan. He returned to Birmingham in 1958-1959 for further pediatric training and then took up practice in pediatrics in Johannesburg from 1959-1961.

In 1961, Tom and Irene made the difficult decision to leave their homeland. They moved to UW-Madison, where Tom was offered a position as an assistant professor of pediatrics. The first assignment for the young pediatric cardiologist was to find a site for a nursery that could care for premature infants. Eventually he created, and then directed, the first sustainable pediatric cardiology clinic in the new UW Department of Pediatrics. Tom rose up through the academic ranks and after a few years, he turned his attention to medical education. This was an exciting period in pediatrics with development of sophisticated technologies such as cardiac catheterization and neonatal intensive care, but Tom recognized that the rapid progress in medical practices requires equal attention to teaching the associated knowledge and skills to learners at all levels from students to practitioners. He is fondly remembered by those who learned under him as medical students and residents in pediatrics for his unassuming, supportive style combined with a deep dedication to the well-being of children and comprehensive education.

in 1965, the UW Medical School established its Department of Continuing Medical Education, one of the nation's first such programs, and Tom was appointed its first director. He later was named the school's first associate dean for education, a position he held from 1967 to 1976, becoming professor of pediatrics in 1970. Under his direction, his office established several programs. He was among the first to see the value of what today is known as distance education—he promoted “telelectures,” or telephone tapes, and dial-access libraries, for physicians and allied health professionals. These were conducted from UW-Madison's Radio Hall and allowed practicing physicians from around the state to receive advanced medical education in the home hospital where they could ask our faculty questions and receive consultations.

Tom also had an abiding interest in programs that offered remediation for physicians who encountered difficulties in their medical practices as the field advanced rapidly with the introduction of new methods for diagnosis and treatment. A compassionate and fair man, he was considered a national innovator who influenced many similar programs across the United States.

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Another program instituted by Tom's office was the Independent Study Program for Basic Sciences (ISP), which allowed medical students to proceed at their own pace in fulfilling the school's course requirements. This greatly benefitted women, and the school strove to achieve gender balance. Tom served as ISP director from its beginning in 1976 until he stepped down in 1985.

Tom was elected a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh) and was given the Western Electric Appreciation Award in 1970 in recognition of outstanding achievement in meeting educational needs of physicians, the Ida and George Eliot Prize from the American Medical Librarians, the Wisconsin Hospital Association Award of Merit, and the Gerard B. Lambert Special Recognition Award for Dial Access Library.

In 1985, he became vice president of medical affairs at St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center in Madison, a position he held for another ten years. He retired in 1995 and was named professor emeritus of pediatrics.

Following "retirement," Tom served as the medical editor of the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* from 1995 to 2007. He transformed the journal by instilling more academic perspectives and promoting thematic issues on hot topics in medical practice. There, and with the Wisconsin Medical Society, he continued his role as a gentle teacher and guide for colleagues.

Tom's career was characterized by leading innovations and by service to patients, parents, students, and the profession he loved. He was truly the epitome of a gentleman and a scholar.

He is survived by his wife, Dr. Irene Ibler, five children and ten grandchildren.

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