



Dr. Carl Owen Mead PHD MD

December 24, 1938 - October 19, 2014

Dr. Carl Owen Mead, PHD MD, passed away at his Wenatchee home October 19, 2014. He was born December 24, 1938, to Aletha Joan Holder and Fred Lester Mead, DDS of Rockford, IL. A man of quiet faith, he chose to attend Wheaton College in Illinois, where he earned his Bachelor of Science in 1960. Possessing a strong work ethic, he put himself through college and medical school, working multiple jobs and pursuing scholarship opportunities. He met future wife, Peggy, who was pre-med at the time, in a zoology class he taught to help pay his way; they married in 1962. Following college, Carl attended Johns Hopkins Medical School and Johns Hopkins Graduate School, where he was chosen to take part in a then unique program that earned him his MD and PhD simultaneously in 1965. The monies he received from his selection as a Kennedy Award Scholar helped put him through graduate school. His research work was recognized by the Brain Institute of the Netherlands, who asked him to present his paper to their membership in Amsterdam. His Neurosurgery internship and residency was completed at University of Chicago in 1970. He authored several papers, was an award winning researcher, and a gifted surgeon, which was his true passion.

Carl honored his commitment to the Army and served in Vietnam in 1971, at Long Binh. Major Carl Mead was USARV Consultant in Neurosurgery, Vietnam, Chief of Neurosurgery, 24th Evacuation Hospital, and Commanding Officer 933rd medical detachment-Neurosurgical Mobile Team. He then

became the assistant Chief of Neurosurgery at Madigan General Hospital, where he completed his service in 1972. He was awarded the Bronze Star. He chose the Pacific Northwest and Madigan to complete his final year of service because it was new and unfamiliar territory. Carl saw obstacles as opportunities and, throughout his life, sought out new experiences and relished the challenges they offered. Although he had standing offers to return to Johns Hopkins or University of Chicago, in a research or surgical capacity, an encounter with neurologist Dr. Robert Rankin and Clyde Ballard of Ballard Ambulance offered him an irresistible challenge. He was very impressed with the level of training the specialists who owned the Clinic possessed and by Clyde Ballard's determination to continually seek the best training and equipment he could for his ambulance service. This brought him to the beautiful Wenatchee Valley and Wenatchee Valley Clinic.

A Board certified Neurosurgeon, he rose to the challenge of creating the Neurosurgery department from the ground up. He trained and mentored the nurses and staff, advised on the selection of equipment, and succeeded in building the Hospital ER into a level one trauma center. He was a skilled diagnostician in the days before MRI's and CT scans. His practice extended throughout north central Washington from Canada to Yakima and from the Cascades to Spokane. For 20 years of that practice, he was the sole neurosurgeon in the area and on call 24/7. He always said yes to the ringing phone, often visiting his patients on his days off. His family understood the only way for Carl to have down time was to leave the area entirely. He followed his patient's lives where possible and took a quiet pride in their successes and milestones. Throughout the years, he often received calls, letters and cards from patients, thanking him for their lives. On the day of his death, he received such a call. A former patient, who called regularly for over 20 years, chose that morning to touch base again.

A member of the AMA and past President of the Washington Association of

Neurological Surgeons, he was cool and calm under pressure, with an intense capacity to focus. He had the ability to translate the complex and often scary jargon of his profession into clear terms for his patients and their families. His kind, open and unassuming manner put people at ease. He had a mischievous and wicked sense of humor, loved to laugh and always got the joke. His open and accessible manner did not mask his fierce intellect. His word could be relied upon, because he was himself a man of honor, character and deep integrity. He was a complex and private man of many layers and, while he had complete confidence in himself, never felt the need to put himself forward or seek out the spotlight. Despite failing health, his commitment and dedication caused him to hold off full retirement as long as he could in an effort to help the Hospital maintain its trauma one status. His final retirement was in 2003.

He loved his family and, despite his heavy case load, saw their plays, attended their concerts and was present to appreciate, support and encourage them in their endeavors. One of his daughter Jennifer's fondest memories is of their time on the tennis court. Carl introduced Jennifer to tennis and often, after he completed his rounds, the two of them would play. For a time, he sat on the board of the WRAC to support her. He had been a bow hunter in his youth and, while he did not continue hunting, greatly appreciated all the recreational opportunities the Valley had to offer. When he could, he took his family camping, fishing or skiing with his daughters on Mission Ridge. He also took them to art galleries, museums, symphonies, ballet and live theater. He admired excellence and its pursuit, which may explain Carl's love of sports; all sports. He was trained in the piano and organ, built himself a Harpsichord and had even taught himself to play the Mandolin in Vietnam. After a serious surgery, he taught himself to play the Harmonica to help rehabilitate his lungs. He was a wonderful photographer and maintained a dark room. His photographs and sculptures have been exhibited. He was

fascinated by astronomy and loved birds, trains and the sound of sirens. Learning new things was exciting; teaching himself medical Russian but one example. A fantastic chef, he loved good food and found cooking for people relaxing.

His interests were eclectic and only limited by time. A true academic, an avid collector of knowledge and voracious reader, he especially loved history and travel; traits passed on to daughter, Stacey. He filled his life with adventures and new discoveries. He traveled from pole to pole with his girls. Family vacations were planned to take advantage of the history, art and culture of their destinations. His own family history caught his attention when on vacation in England, he and Peggy chanced upon a memorial bust of Sir Richard Mead in Westminster Abbey an ancestor, who was appointed physician to King George II in 1727. This affirmed the long Mead family history in medicine, science and law; the primary theme being service to others.

While his health had been in decline, his actual death was unexpected and sudden. In addition to his parents, Carl was preceded in death by his brothers, Robert Mead, DVM, who served as Washington State Veterinarian, and Fred Mead, an electrician; and his sister, Martha Kothe, who had been a medical secretary. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Peggy (Catron) Mead; daughters, Stacey Mead, and Jennifer Kochheiser; his grandson, Jordan Owen Kochheiser; his mother-in-law, Billie Blondheim; and sisters-in law, Linda and Marilyn; as well as many nieces and nephews.

He wanted no service, no memorial, and no obituary. His family has honored his wishes, but being proud of him and the man he was, have chosen to disobey him just this little bit, to share his life with you. If he meant something to you, please share your stories with us online at Jones & Jones~Betts Funeral Home or the memoriam link at The Wenatchee World. If you wish, cards may be sent to the funeral home or to P.O. Box 5124, Wenatchee, WA

98807.

Remember him.

Tribute Wall

VP

“ Thanks to this man my father, John W. Pickens lived past the age of 56 from a brain hemorrhage in 1991 till 2014. Today would have been my father's 77th birthday 12/14/36. My father loved ice-skating in his backyard at 15 years. Han Brinker story is parallel to my father's success at living 20 beyond his brain hemorrhage in 1991. The late Dr. Mead was to thank for this and in turn around thanks, I now I am a caregiver of this neurosurgeon' mother-in-law. So happy to have met you Peggy to tell you this in time for Carl's Birthday with your family. Sincerely, Victoria Pickens

Victoria Pickens - December 14, 2014 at 04:39 PM

KC

“ I was one of Dr. Mead's patients in December of 1979. In my mid-20's, I moved to Wenatchee and brought with me a 2 year old work injury to my back that doctors of L&I could not get a handle on. They gave up saying it must be a tumor, which they would not cover. I ended up collapsing at my home and being rushed to the hospital where the late Dr. Cox correctly diagnosed my lower back with a badly blown out disc. He then called in Dr. Mead who promptly said I needed surgery immediately and I promptly told him I was going to Seattle! He was aghast and told me he had done surgeries out in the fields of VietNam and he would have no problem doing mine! So, what could I say?! I was told I would be in the hospital 2 weeks recovering and I asked him if I could get out as soon as I could walk, which he smiled and said "yes". Going into surgery, it was delayed as he got caught in an emergency motorcycle injury, so by the time they wheeled me down he was standing at the big doors eating a tuna fish sandwich! He was surprised I was not put out by then, I was surprised he was eating right before cutting me open! He said he had not had a break that day and was hungry! But I got wheeled in awake and saw all his trays of tools laid out in that bright room so he starting yelling to everyone to cover them all up and why was I awake! Being young, and Dr. Mead being such a gifted surgeon, I recovered quickly and in 3 days I was up and walking! So I asked him if I could go home! Of course the physical therapist was having a fit letting me go that early but Carl said a deal was a deal and out the door I went. Once the stiches came out I never had problems again. I was very lucky to have been in Wenatchee and met such a good man. He let L&I know it was no tumor in no uncertain terms! Thanks to Dr. Mead's family for sharing Carl with so many of his grateful patients. K. Janie Countryman

K. Janie Countryman - November 14, 2014 at 04:58 PM

DM

“ I had the opportunity to with Carl as a colleague and friend in the operating room at Central Washington Hospital from 1986 until his retirement. He was a skilled surgeon and a fine man. I respected his dedication to his work and his patients. He was committed to using his gifts to serve patients and worked "above and beyond" what was required. Quick Story: Carl mellowed a bit in the later years of his practice, but there was a time when he would want the operating very quiet. A quiet whisper in the back of the room or the sound of opening a bag of I.V. fluids was enough to stop him from operating. He would not say anything, just look up and wait for the quiet to resume. Then he would put his head down and go back to work. He wouldn't say a word, but the look in his eyes would relay the message.
I enjoyed working with Carl, he was a great doc. Rest in Peace old friend.

Dave Wiggum, MD - November 06, 2014 at 05:03 PM

JK

That look said it all!

jennifer kochheiser - November 09, 2014 at 09:36 PM

DM

“ Dave Wiggum, MD lit a candle in memory of
Dr. Carl Owen Mead PHD MD



Dave Wiggum, MD - November 06, 2014 at 04:48 PM

ET

“ Dear Family,

I had Carl do a carpal tunnel surgery on my left hand. This cured the long-time numbness that annoyed me for many years. Thank you all for sharing the story of this remarkable, talented man.

Sincerely,

Earl Tilly

Earl Tilly - November 05, 2014 at 06:39 PM

JV

“ Peggy, thank you for the wonderful written tribute to a truly extraordinary man.

Your neighbors, John and Elaine VanderSchalie.

John VanderSchalie - November 04, 2014 at 01:37 PM



Jennifer
Kochheiser

“ Jennifer Kochheiser lit a candle in memory of
Dr. Carl Owen Mead PHD MD



Jennifer Kochheiser - November 03, 2014 at 09:37 PM