



Dr. Jack Baylor McConnell

Volunteers In Medicine founder Dr. Jack Baylor McConnell passed away peacefully on Feb. 6 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. Born Feb. 1, 1925, Dr. McConnell was the youngest of eight children of the late Rev. Enoch Luther McConnell and his wife Martha Jane Davidson.

Following graduation in 1943 from Dobyns-Bennett High School in Kingsport, TN, Dr. McConnell enlisted in the Navy, which under its V-12 program sent him to the University of Virginia for his undergraduate work. He attended the University of Mississippi for the first two years of medical school, receiving his medical degree from the University of Tennessee in 1949. He completed his internship and pediatric residency at Baylor College of Medicine.

After suffering two bouts with tuberculosis following his training, Dr. McConnell chose to go into research. It was at Lederle Laboratories that he met the love of his life, the former Mary Ellen Rhodes. They were blessed with two sons, Steven (Paula Rivers), Page (Heather Pearson), and a daughter, Katherine (Karl Seeley).

During his time at Lederle, Dr. McConnell co-invented the tine test, used for the detection of tuberculosis, and

participated in the early stages of the development of the polio vaccine. He then joined McNeil Laboratories where he directed the development of Tylenol tablets. Subsequently, he moved to the headquarters of Johnson & Johnson as Corporate Director for Advanced Technology. In this capacity, he traveled the world in search of new healthcare products and technology. During his time at Johnson & Johnson he directed the program for the first commercial MRI system in the United States.

In 1987, Dr. McConnell helped Sen. Pete Domenici write the bill authorizing the Human Genome Project. He also worked closely with J. Craig Venter and the Institute for Genomic Research on the business and ethical issues associated with genomic study.

Following retirement from Johnson & Johnson in 1989, he and Mary Ellen left their home of 20 years in Basking Ridge, N.J. to start a new life in Hilton Head, S.C. It was in retirement that Dr. McConnell made what he considered his greatest achievement, the founding of the Volunteers in Medicine Clinic, serving the health and wellness needs of the medically underserved living or working on Hilton Head and Daufuskie Islands. He then went on to establish the Volunteers in Medicine Institute which has guided and supported more than 100 communities around the country in starting similar clinics.

Dr. McConnell received dozens of awards and recognitions for his life's work, including honorary doctorates from Emory & Henry College (1982), Presbyterian College of South Carolina (1998), and the University of South Carolina Beaufort (2007). In addition, he was awarded the

Pride of the Profession Award by the AMA (2004), which two years later created the Jack B. McConnell, M.D., award for Excellence in Volunteerism (2006). The National Governors Association recognized him with the Distinguished Service to State Government award (1993). AARP presented him with an AARP Impact Award (2006). South Carolina awarded him the Order of the Palmetto (1999), the state's highest honor. On the 200th anniversary of The University of Tennessee, the institution named him one its "200 Most Distinguished Graduates" (1994), and the university's College of Medicine named him "Distinguished Alumnus of the Year" (1990).

Dr. McConnell's siblings, Ruth Fisher, Sam Perry McConnell, Billie Sue Hurst, Anna Laura, Enoch Luther, Jr., Carrie Elizabeth Morton, and Dorothy Mann all predeceased him. In addition to his wife and children, he is survived by seven grandchildren, Delia, Ella, Benjamin, Nora, Garrett, Maxine, and Wynne, as well as many nephews and nieces.

The McConnell family wishes to express its deep gratitude to all the members of the staff at the Dogwood Wing of the Preston Health Center for the loving care and attention they provided Dr. McConnell during the last four and one-half years of his life.

A memorial service will be held March 3 at 2 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, Hilton Head, S.C. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to VIM Clinic, PO Box 23858, Hilton Head Is., SC 29925. There will be a reception for VIM volunteers and patients on Sunday, March 4, from (1:00 to 3:00) p.m. at the Volunteers In Medicine Clinic.