



IN MEMORIAM

John F. Hansbrough
Professor of Surgery & Pediatrics
UC San Diego
1946-2001

John Hansbrough was born in Virginia, graduated from the University of Wisconsin with Honors in Chemistry and attended Harvard Medical School where he graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1972. During this time, he began his career in basic science and his M.D. thesis involved the isolation and purification of RNA from lymphoid tissue.

He subsequently completed his internship and general surgery residency at the University of Colorado and then joined its faculty at University of Colorado where he quickly rose to Associate Professor of Surgery while directing the Surgical Intensive Care Unit, the Emergency Department, and the Burn Unit. During this time, he continued his fundamental interest in basic research and was recruited to UCSD in 1984 as Director of the UCSD Burn Center.

For 17 years, he single-handedly developed the UCSD Burn Unit into an internationally recognized center that not only emphasized excellence in care but opened the frontier for describing the immunosuppressive effects of injury, and the challenge of developing wound coverage using artificial skin.

John was instrumental in developing alternative skin substitutes and, after years of collaboration with NIH, basic scientists, and industry, he was singularly responsible for the development of Dermograft-TC which has become a standard tissue coverage.

During his career, he had continuous extramural funding, served on the editorial board of every major journal related to injury care and participated in visiting professorships throughout the world.

Dr. Hansbrough's commitment to research was classic. He took clinical problems for which he was directly responsible and aggressively pursued solutions that led to real changes in care. He was truly a renaissance surgeon.

His interests were not limited to clinical care and biology. He was deeply interested in ongoing education and the rehabilitation of the injured patient. During the course of his career, he developed resources including a burn camp for injured children and was awarded the Chancellor's Associate Award for Community Service at UCSD. In addition, he was visionary in developing a video based learning center which focused on teaching patients the difficulties of dealing with burn injury and was intimately involved in training residents and peers in the fundamentals of burn care.

As tribute to his efforts, most recently a burn CD demonstrating the fundamentals of burn care was distributed to all physicians caring for soldiers placed in harm's way during the Iraq conflict.

John was quiet, but an internally passionate physician. His commitment to his family was the focus of his life. His dedication to the care of the injured patient was amplified because of this.

He is survived by his wife, Wendy, and his two children.

John's untimely death left a huge void in the Department of Surgery, throughout UCSD, and in the San Diego community. His loss extended internationally and was recognized by a special award from the American Burn Association. He was in line to become president. John gave of himself much more than he received. He saw this as his responsibility to medicine and to the injured patient. Perhaps this alone is his legacy. John was one of the truly great surgeons of his time.

David B. Hoyt