



IN MEMORIAM

John Bartley Dillon
Professor and Chairman Emeritus, Department of Anesthesiology
UC Los Angeles
1911 – 2007

With the death of John Bartley Dillon, yet another early faculty member of the School of Medicine has left us. John was appointed as the first Anesthesiology division chief in the newly created school in 1950, and became its first chair when Anesthesiology attained department status in 1972.

John was born in San Bonito, Texas and raised on Long Island, New York. After earning a bachelor's degree from St Mary's College, he obtained his master's degree in physiology and his medical degree from St Louis University. Although he planned a career in medicine, financial circumstances required that he accept a fellowship in physiology prior to entering medical school. That turn of events proved beneficial for both John and physiology. As a ham radio enthusiast and well versed in electronics, John built a photosensitive plethysmograph that recorded blood pulsation in the digits and facilitated studies of the autonomic nervous system. In turn, John gained the knowledge of physiology that led him to a career in anesthesiology, a medical specialty closely associated with the autonomic nervous system. John excelled as a student and was awarded Alpha Omega Alpha (honorary) recognition upon graduation from medical school in 1943.

Soon after internship in Wisconsin, John was drafted and stationed at Letterman Army Hospital. Having had instruction and hands-on experience in anesthesiology, John was assigned to the anesthesia teaching service. He was soon promoted to chief of the service where he remained for the duration of his military career.

When the war ended, John made his way to Los Angeles and was appointed "Anesthesiologist in Chief" at the Los Angeles General Hospital. William Longmire, the chair of surgery at the newly established UCLA School of Medicine, recruited him from there to head the UCLA Division of Anesthesiology. At the time, there was no hospital on the Westwood campus. Surgical operations were performed primarily at Harbor General Hospital in Torrance, California. John was appointed as Associate Clinical Professor and promoted to Professor of Surgery/ Anesthesiology in 1953. Under John's guidance, the faculty grew to more than 30 and the number of residents trained under his mentorship grew into the hundreds. John contributed to the major advances occurring in Anesthesiology. He published extensively on human responses to neuromuscular blocking drugs, wrote a monograph on spinal anesthesia and, with Dr. David Cohen, an early appointment to the faculty, was instrumental in popularizing the concept of same day surgery. Cohen and Dillon wrote *Anesthesia for Outpatient Surgery*, the book that heralded a new direction for the management of patients undergoing uncomplicated minor surgical procedures. Today, the vast majority of surgical patients return home on the day of their procedure.

John served on numerous University committees including Hospital Executive, Privilege and Tenure, and Risk Management. He served as Vice Chief of Staff for the hospital and as chairman of the Medical School Liaison and Hospital Accreditation Committees. John was an avid traveler and a visiting professor at medical schools throughout the world. He was appointed to the editorial boards of six journals and to organizational committees of professional societies including the American Medical Association, The Association of University Anesthetists, and The American Society of Anesthesiologists. The "John B. Dillon" award, created after his retirement, was designed to identify and honor a member of the Anesthesiology faculty most likely to

attain tenure status in the University.

Upon retirement as department chair in 1972, John and his wife Frances moved to Kauai. There, he continued to enjoy his hobbies of sailing and ham radio. John had been an avid sailor throughout his adult life and had participated in the Trans- Pac race between California and Hawaii. On weekends he often sailed across the channel from Long Beach to his mooring on Santa Catalina Island. John built a radio antenna at his new home in order to keep in touch with his friends throughout the world.

After Frances's death, John married Charlotte, his widowed neighbor. He outlived Charlotte too (the curse of longevity), but continued to have close friends who loved and cared for him. John died peacefully at home at the age of 96 having lived a successful life. The University is in the process of establishing a professorship to be named in his honor.

Leonard Walts