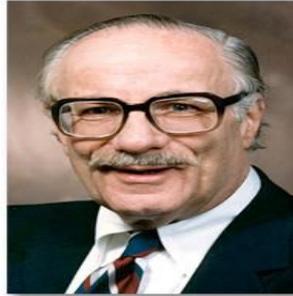

Dr. Max Harry Weil, Pioneer in Critical Care, Dies at 84



Dr. Max Harry Weil, called the father of the critical care movement, died of prostate cancer at his home at age 84. The founder of the Weil Institute of Critical Care, he is credited with developing the first ICUs and introducing computerised patient monitors. "The things that we are doing right now are all because of him," said Dr. Shahriyar Tavakoli, ICU medical director at Eisenhower Medical Center.

Recognised throughout the world as the father of the critical care movement, Weil's lengthy list of innovations changed the landscape of medicine.

He established the first critical care unit; introduced computerised patient monitors; and took defibrillators into stores, restaurants and country clubs across the Coachella Valley.

During a career that continued well into his final days, Weil wrote more than 1,300 peer-reviewed articles and books and has U.S. patents on 25 inventions.

He also trained legions of doctors, nurses and health care professionals in the around-the-clock monitoring of a patient's vital signs, saving an incalculable number of lives.

Born in Switzerland and raised in Germany, Weil moved to New York when he was 10 years old.

After a stint at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., Weil moved to California to pursue his interest in saving critically ill patients by working as a professor and researcher.

In 1958, Weil and Dr. Herbert S. Shubin started the Shock Research Unit, one of the first intensive care units in the nation. The pair then founded the Institute of Critical Care Medicine in 1961.

Weil — a desert lover whose parents had vacationed in the valley since the 1960s — moved the institute to Palm Springs in 1991. It is now based out of Rancho Mirage.

Known to his friends as Hal, Weil carved out an international reputation for his innovative approach to medicine and his thoughtful dialogue with both patients and fellows.

In September 2009, the World Federation of Societies of Intensive and Critical Care Medicine presented him with the Lifetime Achievement Award in a ceremony in Florence, Italy.

His death is a major loss to the medical community across the world, and the institute has already been inundated with messages planning memorials and moments of silence for Weil.

"He really loved what he did, and I think that became somewhat of a religion for him, to save more lives," said Dr. Wanchun Tang, the institute's president and chief executive officer.

Weil is survived by his wife, Marianne Posner Weil; daughters Susan Margot Weil and Carol Juliet Weil; and four granddaughters.

SOURCES: www.sccm.org; and www.mydesert.com

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