



John Arthur Kirkpatrick, Jr.



JOHN A. KIRKPATRICK, JR., MD, Professor of Radiology, Harvard Medical School, Radiologist-in-Chief, Children's Hospital, Boston, from 1974-1992, was universally respected as a brilliant observer with an encyclopedic knowledge of diseases of children. The most outstanding characteristic of this beloved professor was his capacity for friendships. As a colleague once noted "he was proud to be numbered among John's several hundred close personal friends". The radiology viewing rooms were crowded whenever John was present (and he often was). One pediatric intern commented "Let's order a chest film so we can have an excuse to discuss this patient with Dr. Kirkpatrick". Always courteous, often with a good story and a hearty laugh, he reached out to everyone, was remarkable in remembering names,

and was always available to teach. As a former fellow wrote, "I always knew that when a problem came up I could always go to him, and his advice was the right thing. I am of course not speaking about what test to do, or the differential diagnosis, though Dr. K's judgement in those matters was always impeccable; I, and many others here at Children's always knew that Dr. K., our mentor, was the fixed point in the moral compass, and when we were lost he would point us in the right direction. There is nothing more important, and reassuring, for the physicians in training than to have a model of how to do your job the right way. He combined the authority which came from a life of achievement with a remarkable lack of pretentiousness."

John was born in 1926 in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, on the eastern edge of the Appalachian Mountains. His maternal grandparents lived in Ringgold, Maryland, three miles from Waynesboro where his paternal grandparents lived. He graduated from high school in 1943, enrolled in a Navy V-12 program, and was assigned as an apprentice seaman in the premedical unit of Franklin and Marshall College. After 2 years he was sent to the V-12 program at Temple Medical School, from which he graduated in 1949.

During medical school he worked as a volunteer in the hospital in York, Pennsylvania, and subsequently elected a rotating internship there. This provided him with experience on the front lines of medical care, and the opportunity to meet a hospital volunteer, Jane Nealing, who became his wife on July 1, 1950. When the United States and the United Nations entered the Korean war, John was called for active duty, and assigned to the Naval Academy in Annapolis to perform physical examinations and respond to cadets' sick calls. Stimulated by Dr. Edward Chamberlain in the radiology department at Temple, he undertook a residency there from 1952-55. Dr. Chamberlain allowed him to substitute the last six months of his residency for study at Boston Children's Hospital under the guidance of the eminent Dr. Edward B. D. Neuhauser and his outstanding associate, Dr. Martin (Dick) Wittenborg. His first paper was published during that period and was a classic study of cystic adenomatoid malformation of the lung in infants (1956).

He returned to St. Christopher's in July, 1955 and initially ran the department of radiology alone. Surrounded by a stimulating medical staff headed by Dr. Waldo Nelson, he produced several original publications each year and was the coauthor with Ernest Aegerter of a textbook, **Orthopedic Diseases**, first edition 1958, fourth edition 1975.

He quickly was recognized as a leader among pediatric radiologists, and it is not surprising that he was called to and accepted the challenge of succeeding Dr. Neuhauser at Harvard and Children's Hospital, Boston in 1974. Meanwhile his writing and teaching accelerated so that by 1993 his papers numbered 107, and chapters in others' books were 43. He has held more than 45 visiting professorships and presented 33 named lectures. He rarely refused a request to teach, since he never wanted to disappoint anyone.

John was more than a superb radiologist and chairman. He came to know his patients and their parents, and would come to the wards to inquire about the children. He was also a superb medical citizen, chairing the staff-executive committee at Children's and the Executive committee of the department of Radiology at Harvard Medical School.

His honors included presidencies of the American Roentgen Ray Society, the Society for Pediatric Radiology, the International Skeletal Society, and the New England Roentgen Ray Society. He was a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and an honorary member of 16 medical societies abroad. He received Gold Medals from the American College of Radiology, International Skeletal Society, the Society for Pediatric Radiology, and the American Roentgen Ray Society. The cities of Houston, Texas and Boston, Massachusetts proclaimed Dr. John A. Kirkpatrick Days in 1991.

He and his wife Jane, former Chairman of the Ladies' Committee, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, became parents of John A. Kirkpatrick III, editor of the Patriot-Ledger in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Katherine Kirkpatrick, a lawyer in Boston, Massachusetts, and Ann Kirkpatrick Tripp, a financial officer with

Allmerica in Worcester, Massachusetts. Dr. Kirkpatrick retired in January 1994, and died of metastatic carcinoma of the prostate on May 8, 1994. He is survived by his wife, his three children, and four grandchildren. His family and friends remember him for his enthusiasm for his work, his infectious laugh, and also his recreation. He was an ardent deep-sea fisherman off the Jersey coast, when living in Philadelphia and an avid golfer when living in Massachusetts. Wherever his many colleagues assemble, in the radiology reading room, at home, or on the golf course, this great man will long be remembered.

The Children's Hospital, Boston, has designated the first endowed chair in Pediatric Radiology as the John A. Kirkpatrick Professorship.

Respectfully submitted,

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