Bertram Girdany, MD (1919–2012)

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Bertram Girdany, MD

Dr. Bertram Girdany was a pioneer in the field of pediatric radiology. He spent most of his medical career in Pittsburgh. He was one of the key individuals who took radiology departments at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh from virtually ground zero to among the country's outstanding academic radiology departments in terms of size, diversity, quality and complexity, serving both the medical school and the decentralized 2,600-bed complex of hospitals that constitute the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, by the time of his retirement in 1990.

Dr. Girdany died at his home in Sarasota, FL, on July 31, 2012.

He completed his undergraduate studies at Columbia University and received his medical degree at Johns Hopkins Medical

School. He trained in pediatrics at Johns Hopkins and at Bellevue Hospital in New York. He is one of only two physicians whom Dr. John Caffey, who is regarded as the father of pediatric radiology, ever accepted for fellowship training at the Babies & Children's Hospital in New York.

Dr. Girdany joined as the director of Radiology at the newly built Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh in 1950 and served in that capacity until he retired in 1990, with a hiatus from 1976 through 1986 during which time he was the chairman of the Department of Radiology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

A founding member of the Society for Pediatric Radiology, Dr. Girdany served as its president in 1971, when he inaugurated the annual Neuhauser Lecture, which was delivered by Dr. Caffey. In addition he served as the president of several medical organizations including Pittsburgh Roentgen Society and Pittsburgh Pediatric Society. Dr. Girdany was a pivotal force in the John Caffey Society since its inception 50 years ago. He served as its president over several years. During the annual proceedings of this society, Dr. Girdany, with his insightful questions, brought out the best from scholars in pediatric radiology gathered from around the world.

He was a very warm and caring individual beneath his austere demeanor. He trained numerous pediatric radiologists over his career and was strongly supportive of every one of them. He was a brilliant visionary, astute radiologist, outstanding teacher and a masterful administrator. He was an avid reader and sports fan. Most important, he had a high sense of moral character and clear understanding of what was right and wrong. He instilled these virtues in all his radiology trainees and associates and in his three children, Martha Girdany of Falls Church, VA, David Girdany of Somerset, PA, and Paul Girdany of Mt. Lebanon, PA. Dr. Girdany lost the love of his life, Ula, to whom he was married for nearly 70 years, just 6 months prior to his death.

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