In Memoriam

Charles A. Carabello, M.D., FAAP, of Wyomissing, Pa., died Feb. 6 of a massive heart attack. He was 86.

Dr. Carabello, an emeritus fellow, was former head of pediatrics at St. Joseph Hospital, now St. Joseph Medical Center, and former chief of pediatrics at Community General Hospital. He retired in 1991, but practiced part-time.

Over a period of 25 years at St. Joseph, he held the titles of president, chief of staff, and chief of pediatrics.

He received his medical degree from Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia in 1938, interned at Community General Hospital, and served as a resident in pediatrics at Syracuse University, New York.

In addition to his medical career, Dr. Carabello was a talented violinist and director of the Reading Symphony Orchestra for more than 40 years. He held a number of volunteer positions throughout his life, including several with the YMCA. He received service awards from Governor Mifflin High School, Shillington, Pa., in 1971 and 1982.

In 1988, he was honored by the Berks County Medical Society for 50 years of service.

Peggy Copple (Ferry), M.D., FAAP, of Tucson, Ariz., died at her home March 10. She was 62.

An accomplished academic pediatrician, Dr. Copple was one of the first American women to be board certified in neurology with special competence in child neurology.

She was professor of pediatrics and neurology, chief of the section of pediatric neurology, and associate head of the department of pediatrics at the University of Arizona College of Medicine.

Born in Boise, Idaho, Dr. Copple received her medical degree from the University of Oregon Medical School in 1959 and worked a rotating internship at the Minneapolis General Hospital in 1960. She completed her residency in pediatrics at the University of Oregon Medical School Hospitals and Clinics in 1962.

Dr. Copple published over 100 scholarly papers, book chapters and editorials, and was a member of several medical journal editorial boards. She co-authored a textbook on childhood seizure disorders.

Dr. Copple served on the AAP Section on Neurology and the Committee on Scientific Meetings.

Contributions can be made to Casa de los Niños Crisis Center, 547 E. Speedway, Tucson, AZ 85705, or to the Steele Memorial Children’s Research Center, in memory of Peggy Copple, M.D., 1501 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson, AZ 85724.

Lloyd “Jack” Jackson Filer, M.D., FAAP, of Iowa City, Iowa, died Feb. 1 after a short illness. He was 77.

Dr. Filer was professor emeritus of pediatrics at the University of Iowa College of Medicine.

He was the medical director and vice president of Ross Laboratories in Columbus, Ohio, from 1953-65, professor in pediatric nutrition for Mead Johnson from 1967-77, and professor of pediatrics at the University of Iowa College of Medicine from 1965-86.

“Interested in the basic science of nutrition,” was how his close friend, Lewis Barnes, M.D., FAAP, member of the Section on Senior Members, described Dr. Filer.

“I think he was one of the most important influences on the regulation of infant formulas,” he said. “His interest was in developing the guidelines, the legal ramifications of them.”

Dr. Filer was “always enthusiastic,” said Dr. Barnes, recalling a time when he was recruited by Dr. Filer to serve on the AAP Committee on Nutrition.

Dr. Filer was associated with many professional and scientific societies, including the National Academy of Sciences, the Society for Pediatric Research, the American Medical Association, the Institute of Food Technologists and the American Pediatric Society.

Among his honors, Dr. Filer received the Joseph Goldberger Award in Clinical Nutrition in 1978, the American College of Nutrition Award in 1979, was elected a fellow of the American Institute of Nutrition in 1987, and given honorary membership status in the American Dietetic Association, also in 1987.
Waldo Nelson, ‘father of pediatrics,’ dead at 98

Waldo “Bill” Nelson, M.D., FAAP, referred to as the father of pediatrics and famous for the worldwide published book he edited for 50 years, Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics, died March 2 at his home in Gladwyne, Pa., after suffering a stroke. He was 98.

Former chairman of the department of pediatrics at Temple University School of Medicine, and former medical director at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children, both in Philadelphia, Dr. Nelson influenced American pediatrics in many ways, according to former AAP president, George D. Comerci, M.D.

Possibly his most notable achievement was the relationship he forged in 1947 between Temple University and St. Christopher’s, which later earned the hospital national recognition for its excellence in pediatric medicine and research.

“He was able to take what was then a neighborhood children’s hospital and build it into one of the world’s leading research and training centers for pediatrics,” said Dr. Comerci, a close friend and colleague. “Much of that was due to the people that he recruited in the early days who went on to be famous researchers in their own right.”

David S. Smith, M.D., FAAP, member of the Section on Senior Members, recalls being in the first group of residents under Dr. Nelson at St. Christopher’s.

“He worked very hard and he expected that of everybody,” said Dr. Smith. “He certainly had a lot of insight into people and patients.”

One of the warmest memories that AAP board member Sue Aronson, M.D., has of Dr. Nelson is when she was once making rounds with medical students, and suddenly saw Dr. Nelson listening at the door. When she asked him if he had something to say, he simply said, “No, I’m just listening to learn.”

Dr. Nelson was a stern, yet caring person who never hesitated to help colleagues in need of advice. His textbook, often referred to as the pediatrician’s bible or the green bible, was one way in which he offered support and expertise.

“It’s the most popular book on pediatrics for medical students, residents and practitioners alike,” said Dr. Comerci. As a medical student, Dr. Comerci could not afford to purchase the textbook. Dr. Nelson not only kindly offered him a free copy, but gave him the very first copy of the sixth edition printing before it had even been bound. Many years later, he asked for it back, but Dr. Comerci jokingly replied, “That textbook remains a cherished possession. It’s not for sale.”

Dr. Nelson’s long list of honors included the Jacobi Award in 1969, the Howland Award in 1972, the Armstrong Award in 1984, the Gold Medal Award of Children’s Hospital in Philadelphia in 1985, the Proctor Award from Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati in 1986, the Donald Drake Medal from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine in 1990, and the AAP Lifetime Achievement Award in 1994.

Two more recognitions include the establishment of an endowed chair in his name at Temple University, and the Waldo E. Nelson Medical Achievement Award at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children. Dr. Nelson also was one of the first pediatricians to be inducted into the Philadelphia Pediatric Society’s Hall of Fame.

Born in McClure, Ohio, he received his medical degree from the University of Cincinnati School of Medicine in 1926. He interned at Cincinnati General Hospital and completed his residency in pediatrics at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital.

Dr. Nelson served as medical director of the Children’s Convalescent Home in Cincinnati from 1931-40, and was chairman of the department of pediatrics at Temple University School of Medicine from 1940-64. He taught at the Medical College of Pennsylvania from 1964-80, and taught at Temple University well into the 1980’s.

Dr. Nelson joined the Academy in 1937, serving on many AAP committees over the years, including the Committees on Medical Education, Pediatric Awards, Scientific Program, and Tuberculosis. He was a member of the Section on Pulmonology.

He was affiliated with several other societies including the American Medical Association, the Society for Pediatric Research and the Philadelphia Pediatric Society. He served as president of the American Pediatric Society in 1963.

He was first offered the opportunity to edit the popular Textbook of Pediatrics, (which later bore his name) in 1941 after the previous editors’ deaths. In addition, he edited the Journal of Pediatrics from 1939-77, helping to triple its circulation. He served as consulting editor from 1977-95, and for the last two years was emeritus editor.

“He took over the editorship and turned it into one of the leading pediatrics journals,” said Dr. Comerci. “He was responsible for demanding very high-quality research and disseminating that to researchers and practitioners alike.”

“Everybody universally respected him as an editor,” added Dr. Smith, who, for about 20 years, assisted Dr. Nelson in editing the Journal of Pediatrics.

Hundreds of pediatricians will remember Dr. Nelson as an influential person who epitomized the old school pediatric professor, said Dr. Comerci.

Dr. Nelson is survived by his two daughters, Jane N. Beauty of Villanova, Pa., and Ann W. Behrmann of Belvedere, Calif.; a son, William H. Nelson of Swarthmore, Pa.; eight grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Margery Harris, who died in 1982.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made in Dr. Nelson’s memory to either Wittenberg University, Office of Advancement, P.O. Box 720, Springfield, Ohio 45501, or the Waldo E. Nelson Lecture Fund, c/o St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children, Erie & Front Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19134-1095.

— Stefanie Dell’Arliga

Memorials can be sent to the Benjamin Kagan Memorial Pediatric Fund, Department of Pediatrics, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, 8700 Beverly Blvd., Rm. 4510, Los Angeles, CA 90048.

Josef Svejcar, M.D., of Prague, Czechoslovakia, died Jan. 30 at age 99.

Dr. Svejcar was an AAP honorary fellow from 1963 to 1980. He was a member of the Czech Pediatric Society and the Green Cross Czech Republic of Green Cross International. He headed the department of pediatrics at the Thomayer Hospital Postgraduate Medical Institute in Prague.

After his retirement 30 years ago, Dr. Svejcar chose to remain active as a lecturer and adviser to the health ministry. He was once referred to as the “Dr. Spock” of Central Europe, revered by generations of Czech mothers for his book on child care.

A memorial service will be held on May 20 in honor of his 100th birthday.
In Memoriam
AAP News 1997;13;32

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