
In memoriam

ONEITA FAYE HEDGECK, MD

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Dr. Oneita Hedgecock, one of the first women anesthesiologists on the medical staff at Baylor University Medical Center (BUMC), died at her North Dallas home on October 13, 2006. She was 73 years old. She became interested in medicine as a young teenager watching her sister spend 11 months at BUMC in a body cast for severe scoliosis. She recalled watching Dr. D'Errico, a distinguished neurosurgeon, make daily rounds with an entourage. Dr. Hedgecock attended Woodrow Wilson High School in Dallas, North Texas State University in Denton, and the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. She completed her internship and residency in anesthesiology at the University of California, Los Angeles, before returning to Dallas and joining the BUMC medical staff. During her 32 years at BUMC, from 1961 to 1993, Dr. Hedgecock became known as an ardent patient advocate who went to great lengths to put patients at ease. She introduced patient warming blankets to maintain body temperature during prolonged surgeries. She also chaired BUMC's morbidity and mortality conferences and a quality improvement committee and was a founding member of the credentialing committee. Dr. Hedgecock completed 17 marathons, including the New York City and Boston Marathons. She later took up racewalking under the training of Tracy Jo Wilson and was a board member of the Tracy Jo Wilson Ovarian Cancer Foundation. An animal lover, Dr. Hedgecock also volunteered at the Dallas Zoo.

ALVIN D. SEARS, MD

Department of Radiology, Baylor University Medical Center

Dr. A. D. "Ziggy" Sears, a visionary radiologist who was chairman of BUMC's Department of Radiology from 1965 to 1992, died on October 24, 2006, at the age of 85. Dr. Sears was born in Tahoka, Texas, and attended Lamesa High School, the University of Texas, and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School. His education was interrupted by service in the US Navy during World War II, where he was a lieutenant in the European and Asiatic Pacific theaters. His medical career at BUMC was marked by many firsts. He was recognized for performing BUMC's first catheter angiogram; recognizing early on the value of mammography and helping to establish the breast center at BUMC; obtaining a computed tomography scanner for BUMC, which was the first in Texas and one of the first in the nation; obtaining a magnetic resonance scanner for BUMC, which was the first hospital-based scanner in the Southwest; and adding diagnostic ultrasonography to the department. He also contributed to numerous other successful medical center projects and was also a founding member of Radiology Associates. In 2005, the American Radiology Association established the "A.D. Sears Silver Star Award" in his honor to recognize the most outstanding US radiologist. Dr. Sears and his wife, Ouida, had three daughters, one of whom (Laura Sears, MD) is a dermatologist on the medical staff at BUMC. "It is impossible to overstate Dr. Sears' importance to Baylor's growth and reputation through advanced technology for excellent patient care," said Michael J. Smerud, MD, chief of BUMC radiology. "In addition to his countless contributions to BUMC, Dr. Sears was a gracious and kind soul. He was often described as a true Southern gentleman and was a model of professionalism."

See the tributes to these physicians on pages 77 and 79.