

Dr. Henry Hildebrand passed away on Feb 13, 2008. The eighth of 12 children, he was born in rural Manitoba on March 1, 1931. From a young age Henry wanted to be a doctor. While a student he worked as a porter on the CPR. His multiple trips from the Winnipeg to the West Coast introduced Henry to Vancouver. During medical school he married the love of his life and his soul mate, Hilda. Henry interned in Winnipeg and then spent a year in a General Surgery residency in Cleveland, followed by a year in Belgium studying Tropical Medicine.

Henry, Hilda and their 2 young sons headed to the Belgian Congo where he worked for a year. When Civil War broke out the family fled to Angola and with the help of the US Air Force made their way to Paris. From Paris they returned to Winnipeg. Henry then moved the family to Vancouver where he completed his surgical residency. He then joined the surgical staff at Vancouver General Hospital where he practiced first general surgery and later was a founding member of the then fledgling Division of Vascular Surgery. After 30 years, Henry retired in 1996.

Henry was recognized as an excellent technician, compassionate physician, prolific clinical researcher, and a dedicated teacher. He rose through the academic ranks to in 1993, become a Clinical Professor. Henry was a dapper dresser. His white patent leather shoes were to VGH, what the swallows are to San Juan Capistrano, the sure sign of summer.

Henry was an accomplished woodworker and an avid golfer. He loved his motorcycles and his orange Dodge Charger.

Henry was all about family. He and Hilda have 3 children, Lloyd, Ralph and Sharon, and 8 grandchildren. Henry was a deeply religious man. He was involved in many volunteer organizations. He established the Vesico-Vaginal Fistula Fund after one of his several surgical missions to Africa.

In 2007 with his family at his side, Henry was awarded the UBC Medical Alumni Honorary Alumnus Award. In his name the Henry D. Hildebrand Award has been created. The award is given to the UBC junior surgical resident who shows greatest promise as a vascular surgeon; the first recipient will be named later this year.

Henry may be gone but his legacy of integrity and devotion to surgical excellence and patient care remain together with the "Hildebrand Hitch" maneuver in Vascular Surgery.