



## Jerome Modell, M.D., D.Sc. (Hon.)

April 14, 2020

Jerome Modell, M.D., D.Sc. (Hon.), passed away on April 14, 2020 after a brief hospitalization for a chronic illness. He was 87. His remarkable influence as a physician, teacher, researcher, administrator and generous philanthropist has left an indelible mark on University of Florida academic health center as well as throughout the world.

Born in Minnesota, Dr. Modell attended college and medical school at the University of Minnesota before serving in the U.S. Navy from 1957 to 1963 and concluding his military service as chief of anesthesiology at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Pensacola, Florida. At the University of Miami Department of Anesthesiology from 1963 to 1969, Dr. Modell developed his research interests caring for drowning victims and became the international expert in this field with publication of *The Pathophysiology and Treatment of Drowning and Near-Drowning* in 1971.

Dr. Modell served the University of Florida College of Medicine for more than 43 years before his retirement. In 1969, he was named chair of the department of anesthesiology, a position he held for 23 years. While anesthesiology chair, more than 400 residents and fellows graduated from the program; 15 went on to become chairs of medical school departments. Under his leadership, the department became recognized as one of the nation's largest and most prestigious anesthesiology programs in the world. In his administrative roles with the UF College of Medicine, he served as special assistant to the dean for professional support services, senior associate dean for clinical affairs, executive associate dean and interim dean. Dr. Modell also served for five years as associate vice president for UF Health Science Center affiliations, during which he helped establish academic and clinical connections with major health care facilities statewide before retiring from administrative duties in 2000.

Retirement was just a launching pad for Dr. Modell, as he remained active at UF, volunteering three to four days a week to care for patients and teach students in the colleges of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. He was named professor emeritus of anesthesiology and courtesy professor of large animal clinical sciences and oversaw the

Florida Board of Regents' UF Self Insurance Program. His full retirement from UF came on Dec. 31, 2012.

Dr. Modell's impact reached much farther than UF, as he was known worldwide for his discoveries related to the after-effects of near-drowning and the treatment of near-drowning victims. He and his colleagues also conducted the original research in demonstrating that mammals could breathe special oxygenated liquids and survive. He was one of the first in the country recognized as an intensivist, a physician specially trained in critical care. He and his colleagues made numerous contributions to developing unique equipment in the field of intensive pulmonary support. In 1975, Dr. Modell participated in medical exchange trips to the People's Republic of China during rapprochement. In 1962 he was a member of the NASA Astronaut Recovery team for Project Mercury.

During his career, Dr. Modell received several awards, including the Distinguished Service Award from the Florida Society of Anesthesiologists (2006) and faculty membership in Alpha Omega Alpha. He was awarded the UF President's Medallion for Outstanding Service (2000), the Medal of Honor of Maatschappij tot Redding van Drenkelingen (The Society to Rescue People from Drowning) in 2002 and an honorary doctorate of science degree from the University of Florida in 2004. He delivered the American Society of Anesthesiology E.A. Rovenstine Memorial Lecture in 2004. The UF Department of Anesthesiology established an endowed professorship in his name.

Dr. Modell always encouraged scientific writing by his department members, who contributed to more than 2,700 papers, abstracts and book chapters during his tenure. He himself published prolifically in the peer-reviewed literature over seven decades from 1957 to 2011.

In the early 2000s, Dr. Modell was honored by two UF engineering centers for his help in laying the foundation to transform UF into a major center for surface science research — studies of how atoms and molecules at a surface act and react when they come in contact with each other. He recognized early on that the field would be of significance to biomedical research. He also assembled the team of physicians, engineers and computer scientists who developed and obtained a patent on the Human Patient Simulator at UF.

At the invitation of the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, a foundation of the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Dr. Modell wrote an autobiography, published in 2000 by the ASA in the fourth volume of "Careers in Anesthesiology," a series that is part of the library's effort to preserve anesthesiology history.

Dr. Modell was a highly appreciated philanthropic partner to the university. He and his wife, Dr. Shirley Graves, M.D., D.Sc. (Hon.), who also was a longtime faculty member in the department of anesthesiology and established the division of pediatric anesthesiology and critical care medicine, have been generous supporters of a number of initiatives and have helped facilitate private gifts on behalf of others. They were instrumental in the Gravenstein Scholars program fundraising effort, the T.W. Andersen and Haven M. Perkins Educational Endowment and many other funds within the College of Medicine. The Jerome H. Modell Professorship currently is held by Dr. Nik Gravenstein, and recently, Dr. Modell's longtime collaborator and colleague, Dinesh Shah, Ph.D., established the Jerome H. Modell, M.D.–Dinesh O. Shah, Ph.D. Annual Lecture in Anesthesiology by creating the endowed lectureship in Dr. Modell's honor.

Dr. Modell was an avid horseman. He bred and showed winning multiple championships with his beautiful Morgan horses.

Dr. Modell is survived by his wife, Dr. Shirley Graves Modell; his cherished children, Charles Modell (Carol), Dr. Jack Modell (Judy), Julie Modell Abels; six grandchildren, Melissa Abels Klemenz (Dean), Randi Abels Eskanos (Jake), Matthew Modell, Jason Modell, Jennifer Modell Boyd (Kevin), Lindsey Modell Cavallaro (Mike) ; two great grandchildren, Elizabeth Rae Boyd and Madeleine Ann Klemenz; and longtime faithful employee and beloved friend, Stephen Joseph Poole. Dr. Modell cherished his family. He had many friends, both in the world of medicine and the horse industry.

In the eloquent words of Dr. Nik Gravenstein, the College of Medicine is visibly leaning a bit after losing one of its pillars.

Memorial gifts can be made to the Jerome H. Modell, M.D and Dinesh O. Shah, Ph.D. Endowed Lectureship. University of Florida Foundation, 1938 W. University Ave., Gainesville, FL 32603.

# Comments

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“ Jerry was a nice man. He helped our family immensely when our son was a patient at Shands.

**John McAvoy** - April 26, 2020 at 09:42 AM