The Journal of THORACIC AND CARDIOVASCULAR SURGERY

IN MEMORIAM

DONALD L. PAULSON (1912-1999)

A thoracic surgical pioneer in the management of lung carcinoma, Dr Donald L. Paulson died September 1, 1999. Born in St Paul, Minnesota, he attended the University of Minnesota Undergraduate and Medical School. He received not only an MD but also a PhD in surgery and took his general and thoracic surgical training at the Mayo Clinic, where he was a running mate of O. Theron Claggett. After marrying Peggy Willis, the niece of a cardiologist at the Mayo Clinic, he completed his training and enlisted in the army with the onset of World War II. As chief of the Thoracic Surgical Department at Brooke Army Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, he received extensive experience in thoracic surgery, performing as many as 15 operations a day, 6 to 7 days a week.

After discharge, he began his clinical practice with Robert Shaw of Dallas, Texas. They developed a large patient referral in thoracic and cardiovascular surgery from a five-state area and eventually had six associates, including John Kee, Harold C. Urschel, Jr, Richard Wood, and Maruf A. Razzuk. Their clinical practice was a center not only for cardiac, vascular, and esophageal surgery, but also for thoracic surgery, particularly carcinoma of the lung. Dr Shaw developed surgical procedures for superior pulmonary sulcus tumors and

bronchoplastic resection of lung cancer, which Dr Paulson popularized by writing numerous scientific papers.

Through the evaluation of more than 6000 patients

with carcinoma of the lung and constant assessment of outcomes, he developed methods for better patient selection for surgery, use of preoperative radiation, and better operating techniques.

Don Paulson was president of virtually every major thoracic surgical organization in the United States. He served as the second president of the Southern Thoracic Surgical Association. He was a founder and the third president of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons in 1969 and subsequently president of The American Association for Thoracic Surgery in 1981.

The thoracic surgical residency training program in Dallas was initiated by Shaw and Paulson at Baylor University Medical Center. Subsequently, it was transferred to the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School and involved Parkland Hospital, Veterans Administration Hospital, Children's Medical Center, and Baylor University Medical Center. Dr Paulson became a director and examiner for the Board of Thoracic Surgery and subsequently served as its chairman, initiating uniform objectivity, particularly in the scientific written examination. He was a "champion" for general thoracic surgery during a time in which it

was often dominated by cardiac surgery. His presidential address to The American Association of Thoracic Surgery provided direction to general thoracic surgeons and served as their "marching song."

During the formation of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons he was a staunch advocate for a "broad base of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery," not a "rigid, narrow or extremist view," allowing a much brighter future for the organization. He was a member of many editorial boards of scientific journals, his favorite being *The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery*. He served as visiting professor in many countries of the world. After he gave up fishing, his major avocation was the review of outcome data for treatment of carcinoma of the lung. He understood that disease as well as anyone else who ever lived.

Dr Paulson is survived by two daughters, Julie Herbst of Tewksbury, New Jersey, and Margaret Maxson of Dallas; three grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

He was a strong individualist, an imaginative "promoter" in the treatment of thoracic disease, and a caring physician.

Harold C. Urschel, Jr, MD