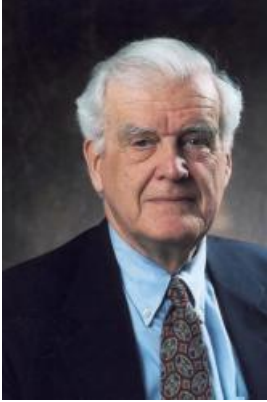


G. Dean MacEwen, MD, Nemours Children's Health Pioneer and Internationally-Renowned Pediatric Orthopedic Surgeon, Dies at 96



Dr. G. Dean MacEwen

We are deeply saddened to share news of the recent passing of Dr. G. Dean MacEwen, a pioneer in pediatric orthopedic surgery. Dr. MacEwen's legacy at Nemours Children's Health and the field of orthopedic surgery is immeasurable. His formal obituary, below, details his influence that extends globally, and includes information on the scheduled memorial service.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Dr. G. Dean and Mrs. Marilyn MacEwen Educational Fund at Nemours Children's Health, which continues their dedication to educating future leaders. Gifts may be made online at www.nemours.org/macewen or by check mailed to Nemours Children's Health Alliance, Shands House, 1600 Rockland Road, Wilmington, DE, 19803.

Dr. G. Dean MacEwen

November 10, 1927 – August 6, 2024

Wilmington, DE

Dr. G. Dean MacEwen, a pioneer in pediatric orthopedic surgery, died on August 6, 2024, at age 96. Dr. MacEwen's contributions to the field have left an indelible mark, influencing countless surgeons and shaping the field of pediatric orthopedics.

Dr. MacEwen's professional legacy is internationally renowned in pediatric orthopedic surgery. Further, he has earned profound respect from his contemporaries, fellows, and students. His prolific research and commitment to education have inestimably shaped the field. In 1995, fully one-third of Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America members were Dr. MacEwen's direct trainees or physicians who enjoyed a close connection to him. A 2005 tribute noted that "[t]he great work that is being done by his numerous fellows all over the globe is a true measure of his contribution to the spread of pediatric orthopedics. [Dr. MacEwen] was not of an age but for all time."

Dr. MacEwen was born to George and Catherine MacEwen on November 10, 1927, on a dairy farm in Metcalfe, Canada. He was the fourth generation of a family that emigrated from Scotland to Canada. Dr. MacEwen is survived by his beloved wife of 70 years, Marilyn (Heidelberger) and their five children: Kathy MacEwen (Charles), Jane Barton (Rick), Nancy Hartigan (Larry), David MacEwen (Jenny) and John MacEwen (Elise), nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Encouraged by his aunt, a nurse, to pursue a medical career, Dr. MacEwen earned his medical degree at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He moved to Washington, DC, for an internship in surgery at the District of Columbia General Hospital, where he met his wife, Marilyn. His training continued with an orthopedic residency at the Campbell Clinic in Memphis, TN. During an interview in 1995, Dr. MacEwen expressed immense gratitude for the opportunity to train in a facility established by Dr. Willis C. Campbell, author of the first edition of Campbell's Operative Orthopaedics, published in 1939. There, he was also mentored by Dr. Harold Boyd.

On Dr. Boyd's strong recommendation, Dr. MacEwen was introduced to Dr. Alfred Shands, the first medical director of the Alfred I. duPont Institute of the Nemours Foundation. In 1957, Dr. Shands was on a visiting lectureship at the Campbell Clinic and inquired about promising young surgeons who might want to join him in Wilmington. Known then as a quiet, intelligent man with excellent skills, Dr. MacEwen moved to the Alfred I. duPont Institute (now known as Nemours Children's Hospital, Delaware) in 1958 to partner with Dr. Shands to grow the Institute.

His peers recognize the breadth and depth of his contributions. Dr. Suken A. Shah, the current Shands/MacEwen Endowed Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery, said, "With a clear vision of what pediatric orthopedics could accomplish, Dr. MacEwen transformed every aspect of the field through a combination of passionate care for children, an unmatched devotion to research, and a relentless commitment to educating and mentoring generations of leaders in the specialty."

William G. Mackenzie, the retired Chair of the Orthopedics Department, emphasized, “Dr. MacEwen’s contribution to the evolution of the sub-specialty of pediatric orthopedics cannot be overstated. Most orthopedic surgeons early in MacEwen’s career cared for adults and children. Dr. MacEwen was part of a small group of international surgeons who promoted this evolution, improving pediatric care.”

As the Institute’s second medical director, Dr. MacEwen quickly expanded services and access to care for more children at the pediatric orthopedic hospital. Though Dr. MacEwen’s primary clinical interests focused on the pediatric spine and developmental dysplasia of the hip, he contributed original research on virtually every condition in children’s orthopedics. He was most proud of his work to establish screening protocols for hip dysplasia in newborns and scoliosis in school children, improving early diagnosis and treatment outcomes.

Under his leadership, the Institute garnered international acclaim for clinical care, surgical training, and research in pediatric orthopedic surgery. Dr. MacEwen had an eye for spotting talent, recruiting fellows and developing other leaders in the field. He traveled extensively as a visiting professor and lecturer in Europe and Latin America.

Dr. MacEwen was likewise a gracious host who recognized the value of international education and established the International Pediatric Orthopaedic Research Fellowship, which allowed many young pediatric orthopedists to study in Wilmington for one year. Participants in the Fellowship stayed in the employees’ quarters of Nemours Estate. His children recall that clinicians from around the world frequently joined the family for dinner. Most academic pediatric orthopedists from Latin America and Europe participated in this program. He also sponsored exchange programs in Korea, India, and Japan. Dr. MacEwen’s immeasurable influence led to leadership opportunities for many.

Scientific contributions and leadership in professional medical societies were very important to Dr. MacEwen. In the span of ten years, he was a charter member and President of the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society (now POSNA), a founding member and President of the Scoliosis Research Society (SRS), and President of the American Orthopaedic Association (AOA). Dr. MacEwen’s contemporaries recognized him with numerous awards, including the POSNA Distinguished Achievement Award in 1995 and the SRS Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017.

His enduring legacy was manifest in the establishment of the Shands/MacEwen Orthopaedic Care Center, the Shands/MacEwen Endowed Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery, and the Dr. G. Dean and Mrs. Marilyn MacEwen Educational Fund at Nemours Children’s Health.

Known for his much-lauded oratorical skills, he developed a reputation for giving excellent, thought-provoking scientific lectures on all conditions in pediatric orthopedics. He was known as a provocative moderator who could “stir the pot” and leave the audience much more informed at the end of a scientific symposium.

While Dr. MacEwen was acclaimed with far too many accolades and earned titles to present here, these transformative accomplishments must be noted: His research output was prolific, with 145 publications to his name, many of which have become seminal works in the field of orthopedic surgery. Dr. MacEwen’s work on two devices revolutionized the treatment of scoliosis and congenital hip dysplasia in the U.S. He developed the Wilmington jacket, a low-profile, custom-molded scoliosis brace that remains the standard of care today; the device eased the pain of wearing the Milwaukee brace, which it replaced. Dr. MacEwen was instrumental in modifying the Pavlik harness to treat infant congenital hip dysplasia. He developed the SRS database for surgical and neurologic complications in scoliosis surgery, a first of its kind worldwide to promote safe surgery in complex procedures.

“I had the experience of learning from the best and then passing my knowledge on to the next generation. I had the privilege of pursuing research that led to better treatments for children with a range of orthopedic conditions,” Dr. MacEwen recounted during the investiture of Dr. Will Mackenzie as the first holder of The Shands/MacEwen Endowed Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery at Nemours Children’s in 2013. “I worked with dedicated colleagues, including my fellow surgeons, fellows and residents, nurses and therapists and all who made the Institute so well-known and regarded and was able to advocate for our expansion to a full-service pediatric hospital where children could receive a full range of medical services for their conditions.”

At Nemours Children’s, Dr. MacEwen will be remembered for many accomplishments, none more significant than his determined efforts to broaden the Institute’s scope of care to include conditions, diseases, and injuries children suffer that extend beyond orthopedics. His singular vision led to the establishment of what is now known as Nemours Children’s Health,

which comprises two award-winning hospitals in Delaware and Florida and more than 70 primary and specialty care locations.

Dr. MacEwen's passion for education extended to Wilmington University, where he served on the Board of Trustees for 40 years and was instrumental in expanding their health sciences program. Dr. MacEwen moved to the Children's Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1987 after retiring from Nemours Children's. There, he served as chair of pediatric orthopedic surgery. The G. Dean MacEwen, M.D. Professorship of Pediatric Orthopaedics was established in 2001 at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center. His program-building and mentorship traditions continued when Dr. MacEwen joined the Department of Orthopaedics at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children from 1995 to 2001. He continued to serve as a consultant at the Philadelphia Shriner's Hospital in Philadelphia for many years after that.

All are invited to Dr. MacEwen's memorial service on Saturday, October 19, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1502 West 13th Street, Wilmington, DE 19806.

The family has requested that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Dr. G. Dean and Mrs. Marilyn MacEwen Educational Fund at Nemours Children's Health, created by the family to continue Dr. MacEwen's legacy for educating future generations of leaders in pediatric orthopedic surgery nationally and worldwide. Gifts may be made online at www.nemours.org/macewen or by check mailed to Nemours Children's Health Alliance, Shands House, 1600 Rockland Road, Wilmington, DE, 19803.

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