

In memoriam: Thomas P. Wood, MD | 1929-2016

April 2016—Thomas P. Wood, MD, the 25th president of the CAP, died Feb. 15 at age 87.



Dr. Wood

Dr. Wood was speaker of the House of Delegates from 1992 to 1995, president-elect from 1995 to 1997, and president from 1997 to 1999. He was a longtime member of the Professional Affairs Committee (which he also chaired) and the Council on Government and Professional Affairs, and he was a board director of the CAP Foundation for six years. In 2000, the CAP recognized him as Pathologist of the Year.

His colleagues express admiration for his leadership, remembering his thoughtful and even-handed style as president.

"Dr. Wood always practiced the art of negotiation and compromise on the College Board, on which there are always people with strong opinions, and he was masterful at dealing with them and creating a respectful environment. He was one of our most diplomatic leaders," says Paul Raslavicus, MD, CAP president from 2001 to 2003.

Jack Bierig, partner at Sidley Austin LLP, lecturer at the University of Chicago, and former general counsel to the CAP, remembers Dr. Wood as "one of the greats" among CAP leaders and a "decent, thoughtful, and kind person."

"When he stepped down as president, I wrote him a note that said, 'If I had to serve again in the Army, you would be the person I'd like to serve under,'" Bierig says. "I meant it. That's one of the highest compliments I can give."

Dr. Wood began his career as a general practitioner in McComb, Miss., then trained in pathology at Ochsner Foundation Hospital. He joined, in 1967, the Tallahassee, Fla., pathology group now known as Ketchum, Wood & Burgert Pathology Associates. He served as the associate medical director for two local laboratories, the District 2 medical examiner of Florida, chief of staff at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, and president of the Florida Society of Pathologists.

Colleagues describe Dr. Wood as a "true Southern gentleman" and "old school in the best sense of the word."

"He treated everyone with respect, whether it was a colleague at the CAP, a new young resident, or someone sweeping the floor," says Paul Bachner, MD, Dr. Wood's successor as CAP president. "That didn't just make him a good leader, it made him a good person to be around, a good husband, a good traveling companion."

"He had an adventurous attitude when it came to seeing the world."

"He always did his homework," Dr. Bachner recalls. "He would seek out people with knowledge so he could make the right decision. He wanted to understand everyone's viewpoint, not just his own."

In 2006, Dr. Wood was awarded the C.D. Taylor President's Award from Tulane University, from which he received

his medical degree, for contributions to medicine in his community, and later that year he received the Outstanding Alumnus Award from the Ochsner Clinic Foundation.

Dr. Raslavicus says he was “always civic-minded,” even with his many professional responsibilities. “The Boy Scouts clearly contributed to his early years, and he stayed active in the Boy Scout leadership in Tallahassee. And he always tried to attend local Rotary meetings in whatever town or country CAP activity took him.”

Dr. Wood’s wife, Nancy, predeceased him. He leaves three sons, one daughter, nine grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

“Great people make lasting impressions, and Tom’s impact is still felt by many,” said CAP president Richard Friedberg, MD, PhD.