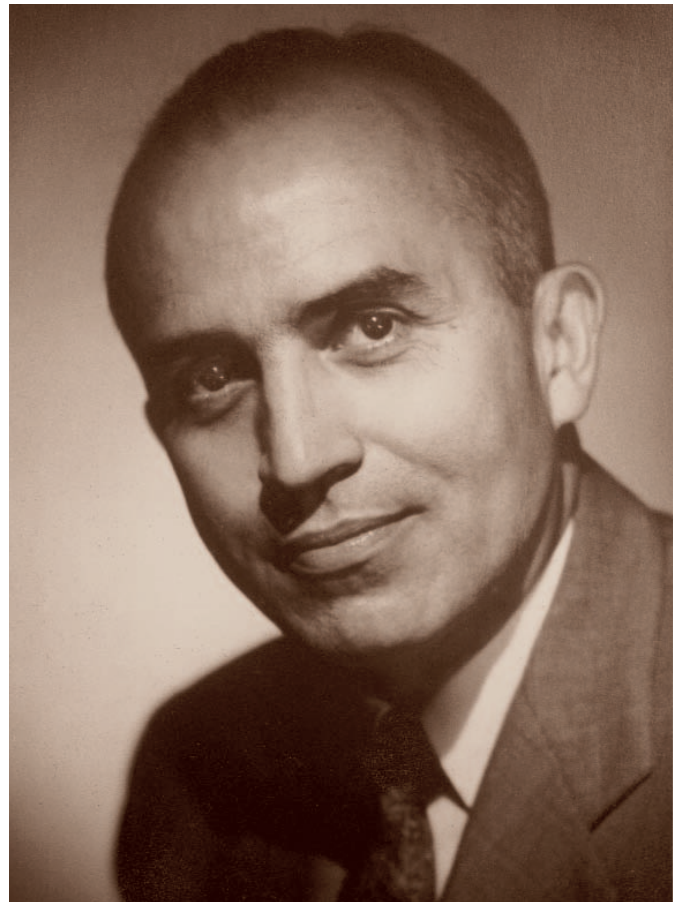


William E. Mitchell Sr., M.D. 1908-1993

By William E. Mitchell Jr., M.D.

William E. Mitchell Sr., M.D., was born in Atlanta in 1908. He and his older brother, Charles, graduated together from Emory College in 1930 and from the Emory University School of Medicine in 1933.



After an internship at Southern Pacific Hospital in San Francisco, Dr. Mitchell embarked on an around-the-world cruise as an assistant ship's surgeon. On that ship, he met passenger Helen Conrad Crockett, a California schoolteacher originally from Oklahoma. They later married.

Upon his return to Atlanta, Dr. Mitchell pursued surgical training at the Steiner Clinic and a formal preceptorship with Floyd W. McRae, M.D., who he met through a mutual interest in Scouting.

After completing his training and board certification, he joined the Navy in 1942. During the invasion of North Africa that year, his troop ship was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean off Algiers, but he was not injured. He later served in the Pacific on the first escort carrier to carry naval jets.

After World War II, Dr. Mitchell returned to surgical practice with Dr. McRae and later had the privilege of admitting the first African-American patient to Piedmont Hospital. He participated in the rejuvenation of the surgical residency program, was instrumental in the design and construction of the first general Intensive Care Unit at Piedmont Hospital and was an enthusiastic supporter of the School of Nursing. Dr. Mitchell served as chief of Surgery, president of the medical staff, and was a member of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees for many years.

His lifelong interest in archaeology was heightened in 1963 by the marriage of his daughter, Connie, to a Canadian archaeologist, Dr. Ronald Stroud, in Athens, Greece. Dr. Mitchell's many other interests included hiking, badminton, tennis, photography, jewelry making and worldwide travel.

After the death of his first wife from breast cancer, Dr. Mitchell married Anne Lee McRae in 1967. In 1968, his son, William E. Mitchell Jr., M.D., joined him in his practice. They shared a great interest in the treatment of breast cancer and practiced together until the elder Dr. Mitchell retired in 1979.

Dr. Mitchell believed that he was fortunate to be a physician and even more fortunate to be a surgeon, since he considered the practice of surgery to be the most enjoyable and satisfying profession imaginable. Further, like many in his generation of remarkable leaders at Piedmont Hospital, he acted on the belief that if physicians sought unselfishly to do what was best for the community and the Hospital, then everyone involved — particularly patients — would ultimately benefit. That belief served him and the Hospital well. Dr. Mitchell is probably best remembered for his dedication to the Piedmont Hospital community, his consideration for others and his unshakably optimistic view that things are going to keep on getting better. ●

Editor's note: William E. Mitchell Jr., M.D., retired as a general surgeon from Piedmont Hospital in October 2003.