



Enid Gilbert Barness

May 31, 1927 - April 28, 2022

Enid May Gilbert Barness (94), died peacefully on April 28, 2022, in Minneapolis, MN, in the home of her eldest daughter, Dr Mary Lawrence.

An internationally renowned physician and scientist, Enid Gilbert Barness, MD (nee Fischer), was born in Sydney, Australia on May 31, 1927, the second daughter of a chemist-turned-entrepreneur father and a dress-maker mother. A gifted student, Enid always knew she wanted to be a doctor. When she graduated from St. George's Girls' High School at the age of 16, needing to declare her top three choices for degree programs on her university application, she wrote 1: Medicine 2: Medicine 3: Medicine. She was one of four women in her medical school class at the University of Sydney Medical School.

Enid left Australia in 1951 to pursue specialty medical training, first to England and then to the United States, where she continued on to immensely enrich the fields of pediatrics and pathology. There is hardly a major topic in those areas to which she did not make an important contribution, both in practice and as a scientist. A world expert on congenital heart defects, she was equally respected for her contributions to tumor biology, congenital anomalies and syndromes, developmental effects of chromosomal defects, and many genetic and hereditary disorders.

Saving hundreds of thousands of babies' lives world-wide, she is best known for her public health contributions. Her research on Sudden-Infant-Death Syndrome (SIDS) identified its major cause as suffocation and led to the national public campaign of "Back to Sleep." Her early research on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, at one time unknown, led to warnings of alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Dr. Gilbert Barnes' professional life was spent in children's hospitals and at universities in Boston; Philadelphia; Washington DC; Austin, Texas; Morgantown, West Virginia; Madison, Wisconsin; and Tampa, Florida. While a professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine, she won the "Best Teacher" award for 5 years in succession, at which point, they made a rule that she could not win it again, in order "to give others a chance." Her students, admiring of her vast medical knowledge and love of a good laugh, nicknamed her "Queen Britannica." On January 26 each year (Australia Day) they wheeled a piano into the lecture hall and sang a rousing chorus of "Waltzing Matilda." In 1984, she was awarded the university-wide UW Distinguished Teaching Award. Having retired "Emeritus" from UW in 1992, Dr. Gilbert-Barnes joined the faculty of University of South Florida as Professor of Pathology and Pediatrics.

Throughout Dr. Gilbert Barnes' remarkable professional career, she won countless awards and honors. She authored over 1000 publications, including over 800 peer-reviewed articles, 120 book chapters, and 23 books. She served on the editorial board of several leading medical journals and was a member of many prestigious societies, including the New York Academy of Science. She was honored for her life-long "extraordinary achievements and contributions to children's healthcare and pediatric pathology" by the Society for Pediatric Pathology. Dr. Gilbert Barnes was awarded three honorary doctorate degrees from the University of Wisconsin, University of South Florida, and University of Sydney. In 2004, Dr. Gilbert Barnes received the

Order of Australia, the highest honor given to Australians by Queen Elizabeth II.

In addition to her extraordinary career, Enid maintained a full family and spiritual life. In 1954, she wed James Bryson Gilbert, MD, the son of an Episcopal minister and a school teacher, a marriage that lasted three decades. According to their children, Enid's favorite maxim was, "Just do it," and she was saying this long before it became a slogan for Nike. A devout Episcopalian, Enid was chosen out of 2000 to be the "Lay Presenter" at the consecration of the Bishop of Chicago. In 1987, Enid married Lewis Abraham Barness, MD, a world-renowned pediatrician, whom she had first met in 1953 while training at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Their marriage produced numerous co-authored medical articles and books and their 26-year love affair ended with Lew's death in 2013. A life-long advocate of children, Enid supported many charitable organizations and testified frequently, pro bono, for child abuse actions.

Still working full-time at age 85, Dr. Gilbert Barness suffered a major stroke while attending rounds at the Tampa General Hospital. Subsequently, she resided in the homes of her two eldest daughters, first in Boston, then in Minneapolis.

Enid was preceded in death by her parents, Mabel Milne and Christian Henry Fischer, her only son James Christian Gilbert; her only sister Norma Fischer Herring; her husband Lewis Abraham Barness, MD; and her grandson, Thomas Kingsley Lawrence. Enid is survived by her four daughters and their spouses: Mary Gilbert Lawrence, MD (James) of Minneapolis; Elizabeth Ann Gilbert-Bono (Mark) of Wellesley Hills, MA; Jennifer Gilbert Voss (Daniel) of Lexington, MA; Rebecca Dierdre Gilbert-Hills, MD (James) of Ashland, OR; ten grandchildren: Alexandra Gilbert-Bono Familia (Ellery), Louis Bryson

Gilbert-Bono, Christian John Lawrence, James Samuel Lawrence, Blake Anthony Gilbert-Bono, Spencer Jered Hills, Curtis Henry Hills, Kiara May Hills, Rebecca Elizabeth Voss, and Nathaniel Christian Edward Voss; and one great-grandson: Greyson Gilbert Familia. Her family miss her dearly and honor her for all she has done to make better the lives of this Earth's children and families.

Dr. Gilbert Barnes' family would like to convey their heartfelt gratitude to all the devoted caregivers and friends that enabled her to live her last months in dignity, comfort, and love. A celebration of her life will be held on Friday, June 3, 2022, at 2:00 pm at Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, MN, followed immediately by a reception for family and friends in the church's Guild Hall. Memorials may be made to Save the Children; St. John's Episcopal Church, Tampa, FL; or Sydney University USA Foundation School of Medicine.

Previous Events

Celebration

JUN 3. 2:00 PM (CT)

Plymouth Congregational Church
1900 Nicollet Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Tribute Wall

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“ *A fantastic Lady.
Most polite, kind, easy going.
The best that came out from Australia (I think).
Dr. Gilbert could produce a valuable scientific paper in 15 minutes
by dictating.
I will never forget her, and I hope to meet her again one day.*

*Edward Nikicicz
enikicicz@gmail.com*

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