



Dr. Glen D. Nelson

May 14, 2016

Nelson, Doctor Glen D. Surgeon and health care innovator, died peacefully Saturday May 14 with family by his side. He was 79. He was beloved and respected by his family, friends, and colleagues for a life defined by deep intelligence, compassion, and integrity. Dr. Nelson's career reflected a relentless quest to improve health care outcomes whether for one patient in his care or hundreds of thousands benefitting from medical innovation. Over a fifty year period, he made significant contributions in health care delivery, insurance, and the medical device industry. His positive impact also included job creation, and philanthropic leadership and generosity, particularly in his home state of Minnesota. Glen Nelson was born March 28, 1937, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, son of husband and wife pharmacists Ralph David Nelson and Edna Mae Nelson. His first job, at age 10, was as clerk at the neighborhood drugstore, Griffin Pharmacy, owned and operated by his parents. Glen received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard College in 1959. While there, he met fellow Edina High School graduate, Marilyn Carlson, at a mixer at Smith College. The couple married in 1961 following her graduation at Smith and shared 54 years of marriage, passion, and partnership. Marilyn once said, "I had the extraordinary good fortune to marry a man who was different from me he was more left brain, a scientist, brilliant." Glen received his MD from the University of Minnesota. He performed general surgery from 1975-1986 at Park Nicollet Medical Center, a large multi-specialty group practice where he became President and CEO. He also

helped launch and grow American MedCenters as its chairman and chief executive officer. In 1986 Glen became vice-chairman of Medtronic, Inc. Asked to describe the transition from medical doctor to business executive, Glen remarked, "as a surgeon, you save one life at a time, but with medical devices, you know you are saving so many more." His deep respect for the inventors of medical technology inspired him to step forward as the patron of the "Patent Garden" honoring the legacies of medical inventors at Medtronic's headquarters. After retiring from Medtronic in 2002, Glen founded GDN Holdings and focused his medical and strategic expertise on health care start-up ventures. He was a leader in the widespread adoption of the retail clinic concept, serving as chairman of MinuteClinic from its inception until the acquisition by CVS. He was viewed as a thought leader in the health care space and served as a board member advising more than twenty companies over time. Glen's wisdom, analytical abilities, and strong moral compass were qualities recognized by many other enterprises and he served on for-profit and non-profit boards including: Minnesota Public Radio, Harvard University Dean's Council, Johns Hopkins Medicine Board of Advisors, The Jackson Hole Group and Travelers Insurance. He was a founding member of the board of Carlson, the privately held company founded by his father-in-law Curt Carlson, and also served on the Carlson Holdings Board of Governors. Glen was distinguished by his personal life as well as his medical career. He possessed quiet empathy and was valued as a deeply thoughtful mentor and advisor to many colleagues and friends. He was also known for his irreverent sense of humor and his trademark delivery of "Sven and Ole" jokes, some off color, at family events as well as social and business gatherings. He liked to move with speed and enjoyed downhill skiing, driving fast cars, and returned, at age 75, to racing hydroplane boats as he had after college. Glen and Marilyn made family the center of their lives, hosting holiday celebrations, attending school "grandparent" days and Minnesota Wild hockey games and providing unconditional love to all. Each grandchild treasures the special memories of the travel adventures he meticulously planned and executed. He

was a loving, inspiring and enduring model. He was the bedrock foundation for family life. Glen is preceded in death by his parents, daughter Juliet Evans Nelson and brother, Jon Robert Nelson. He is survived by his wife Marilyn Carlson Nelson, children Diana Lynn Nelson (John Atwater), Curtis Carlson Nelson, Wendy Martin Nelson, and grandchildren Alexander and James Muresanu, Juliet and Jennifer Nelson, Martin and Sadie Nelson, as well as step-grandchildren, Thea, Jack and Thomas Atwater. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday May 21 at Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church, 511 Groveland, Minneapolis. Contributions in lieu of flowers may be made to Minnesota Public Radio, the Minnesota Orchestra and the Mayo Clinic.

Tribute Wall



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dr. Glen D. Nelson.*



May 23, 2016 at 01:22 PM



“ *Dear Marilyn and family,*

Our memories go back a long way to the days you and Glen were dating. His family lived across the back yard from my friend and I remember her telling me about him, and his great accomplishments. You both have been a light to all you have touched and there have been so many. Good speed to you Dr. Glen, you helped so many and to you my cousin may God wrap you in his arms to help you through your grief. Pat Dickey

Pat Dickey - May 22, 2016 at 10:20 AM



“ *Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Glen D. Nelson.*



May 20, 2016 at 02:23 PM



“ *Garden of Memories was purchased for the family of Dr. Glen D. Nelson.* ”



May 17, 2016 at 03:47 PM