



Herbert Alan Schoening

May 27, 1927 - November 15, 2024

Minneapolis, MN - Minneapolis, age 97, passed away peacefully at home, November 15, 2024. He was preceded in death by his parents, Herbert F and Alvilda Engh Schoening; wife of 45 years, Carol Rech Schoening; sister, Marjorie Bryan; brothers Norman Schoening and Roger (Carol) Schoening; and second wife, Barbara Bates Schoening of 20 years. He is survived by children: Sue Allen (David), Mary Fox (Jeff), Mark (Lisa von der Heydt), Herb (Bryan Mayo), Stephanie Spencer (Ed), and Elizabeth Dolphin (Nick); 10 grandchildren: Michael & Matthew Allen, Paul, Tom & Mark Fox, Aaron & Kalli Schoening, Jennifer Spencer, Natalie & Dani Dolphin; and 14 great-grandchildren.

Born May 27, 1927, Minneapolis, MN, Herb attended Burroughs, Washburn, and the University of Minnesota. He lost his father at age 11, an event that shaped his life profoundly. He found guidance during summers at Camp Ihduhapi as a camper and later as a camp counselor. After high school, he joined the Merchant Marines where he spent a year in California and a year at sea traveling the world. Herb earned his B.A., B.S. and M.D.(1954) from the U of M.

In 1951, while exploring internships in San Francisco, Herb met the love of his life, Carol Rech of St. Paul, MN, on a blind date. Their whirlwind four-day romance led Herb to declare to his mother upon returning home, "I met the girl I'm going to marry." They married a year later. Together they raised six children, starting their family while Herb finished his education & military

service (Air Force) in CA and NJ before returning home to MN. Herb was a Physiatrist and pioneer in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R). He established the Physical Medicine Department at Methodist Hospital and served as Director of Rehabilitation Services at Sister Kenny Institute. He introduced numerous innovative rehabilitation programs, including Minnesota's first Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, Spinal Cord Injury and follow-up programs, and the internationally recognized Kenny Self-Care Evaluation. In 1965, he became the first Director of Rehabilitation Services at St Mary's Hospital where he remained until he retired in 1992. A firm believer in exercise as medicine, his approach to rehabilitation was revolutionary at a time when extended bed rest was the norm. He encouraged patients to regain independence through activity and movement, a philosophy he lived himself every day.

Herb was an avid outdoorsman and athlete. He ran marathons, triathlons, and cross-country skied in the American Birkebeiner. A passionate swimmer, he seasonally swam daily in Lake Harriet or the YMCA until the age of 95. Golf, however, was Herb's favorite activity and a passion he enjoyed with family and friends. He initially joined the U of M Men's club where he played for 20 years and continued to play the course into his 90's. In the early '80's he joined Interlachen Country Club where he was a member for 40 years and played 4-5 times a week after he retired. Always a student of the game, he built his own clubs and tweaked his swing every year after practicing all winter in the house.

Herb was a great dad and passed his adventurous spirit to his children. His bedtime routines included games to get them upstairs "Captain May I" and stories about the "Witch of Lake Harriet". Summer weekends were spent camping, hiking, canoeing, visits to the Arboretum and later swim meets. In the winter when his children were young, he built ice rinks, snow slides and even an igloo. Vacations were to the family cabin on Lake Superior, collecting agates, picking raspberries, and getting "lost" in the woods skiing. Herb also was a self-taught problem solver and someone you could always call for

advice whether it be a home repair or gardening question. He had many interesting fixes and these fixes earned him the affectionate title of "MacGyver".

Herb was blessed to be married to two extraordinary women. Carol, his first wife, was the glue of their family-quick-witted, stylish, and the life of every party. After Carol's passing, Herb reconnected and married Barbara Bates, a childhood classmate. Barbara moved back to Mpls. from Atlanta and brought her Southern charm and grace to their 20 years together, until her death in 2023.

Herb's legacy is one of love, innovation, and resilience. He was an accomplished physician, an outdoorsman, a devoted father, and a loving husband. He often said his greatest achievement was "Raising six children with Carol". His family, friends, colleagues, and countless patients are a testament to his remarkable life well-lived.

The family would like to thank his caregivers: Diana, Patience, Verena & Sabina and the Park Nicollet Hospice team: Nina, Gretchen, Mary & Karilyn for their compassion and friendship. Memorial Service 12:30 PM Saturday, June 28, 2025 at Lakewood Memorial Chapel, 3600 Hennepin Ave. S. Mpls., MN with a reception immediately following.

Cemetery Details

Lakewood Cemetery (Minneapolis)

3600 Hennepin Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Previous Events

Graveside Service

NOV 21. 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM (CT)

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Tribute Wall

PM

“ *The generosity of Dr. Schoening has remained with me since 1988, when as his patient he wisely saved me from back surgery and, with a tailored physical therapy routine, allowed me to care for my newborn and three-year old. For almost 40 years I have saved a letter from him, and thinking today to ask Google 'where is he now?' I am saddened to read of his death. But after such a long life! Such a blessing. -- Philipp M., Minneapolis*

Philipp Muessig - November 30, 2025 at 10:38 PM

CT

“ My sympathies to all of you for losing such a great man. I worked for him at St. Mary’s from 1977 to 1980 as Director of PT. He was the best boss to all of us and was so eager to learn from his staff. Anyone who went to a PT course had to come back and tell him all about it. My particular interest was the pelvis and SI joint and relation to back pain and, after telling him what I had learned, suddenly every back patient he saw had SI problems! We laughed as I had to calm him down and tell him that the incidence wasn’t quite that high!

I have told so many people over the years about his exercise program. Before work every day, he would run the east side of Lake Harriet, east side of Calhoun, around Lake of the Isles, the west side of Calhoun and then get to the north end of Harriet, put his shoes and shirt under a tree, swim across the lake to the south shore, walk the hill to the house, lift weights, shower, eat breakfast and pick up his clothes on the way into work! What an example! I was a novice runner who went between 2-6 miles a day. I remember coming to work and telling him that I felt awful on my run and so couldn’t figure it out. He said, “Just a bad day!”

I left StMary’s as I realized my true passion was treating patients and evaluating and figuring out their issues and not doing administrative jobs. I was seeing some patients but not enough for me. Hardest thing I’ve ever done was to go into his office and resign. We remained in touch as he sent me patients until he retired and we always exchanged Christmas cards.

What a guy and what an inspiration he was for my life. I was a PT for 41 years!

I will try to come to the memorial but my husband just had a knee replacement and is pretty shaky, so unless I can get one of the kids to come over and stay with him, I may have to miss it.

God bless you all,

Cory Tate

Corinne Tate - June 27, 2025 at 04:49 PM