

Joseph Francis Wethington

August 11, 1926 - April 20, 2020

Wethington, Joseph Francis, Ph.D., M.D. passed away April 20, 2020, due to complications of the novel coronavirus at the age of 93. He was born on August 11, 1926, in Huntington, West Virginia, where he was raised on a dairy farm by his parents, Joseph and Etta Wethington, along with five sisters. Dr. Wethington is survived by his wife, Ellen, and their six children and spouses: Michael (Wendy) Wethington, Anne Wethington, Margaret (John) Arnold, Joseph (Susan) Wethington, Elizabeth (Gary) Vaughan, Patrick (Kerry) Wethington, and grandchildren: Michael Joseph Jr. and Anna Marie Wethington (Thomas Myers); Claire, Patrick, Ellen and Matthew Arnold; Glenna and Grace Wethington; Michael Francis and Hannah Vaughan; & Madeline, Audrey, Jacqueline and Adeline Wethington and many loving nieces and nephews from throughout the country. He was preceded in death by infant daughter, Anna Marie, his parents, his sisters, Mary Catherine Wethington, Esther Squire, Dorothy Black, Helen Ortman, and Sr. Marie Josetta Wethington. After graduating from St. Joseph High School in Huntington, he first attended Marshall University and graduated from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree. Following graduation, he moved to Omaha, Nebraska, where he received a master's degree in human anatomy from Creighton University. He then enrolled at the University of Minnesota for a doctoral degree in anatomy. While at the university, he taught biology at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota. He met his wife of 65 years, Ellen Rosemarie Schaub of

Ipswich, South Dakota, and they were married at St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Minneapolis on May 28, 1955. Following their wedding, they moved to Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, where he became a member of the University of Ottawa's Department of Anatomy. As a faculty member, he attended medical school at the university and received his degree in medicine and a doctorate degree in anatomy. After graduation from the University of Ottawa, the couple returned to Minneapolis. Upon completing his residency at St. Mary's Hospital, Minneapolis, he joined the Coon Rapids Medical Center group, and over three decades was instrumental in growing the multi-specialty group in several locations in the metro area (now Allina Health System). He was a charter member of Mercy and Unity hospitals making rounds and working in the emergency rooms for the Emergency Physicians Professional Association. He was instrumental in establishing the first hospice program at Mercy Hospital. Dr. Wethington was a lifetime member of the Minnesota Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, and an Emeritus Registered Physician in the State of Minnesota. While active in his medical practice, Dr. Wethington served as the Anoka County Medical Examiner for 25 years and helped, along with his wife, establish a missionary medical clinic in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala. They were founding members at the Church of Epiphany helping establish a parish community and campus that included a grade school, a new church, a cemetery and a senior care complex all along supporting his dear friend, Fr. Bernard Reiser. Although a recipient of numerous professional and civic awards and recognition in Anoka County and the regional medical community, our father's true love was for his beloved Ellen, his children, grandchildren and the land. Dr. Wethington loved the lakes and rivers of Minnesota ultimately raising the family on the Mississippi River. A Master Gardener and farmer at heart, his passions included working at his hobby farm in Monticello, growing and sharing flowers and vegetables with family and friends, clearing land, growing crops, building paths and a par three golf course for his wife. Dr. Wethington had a deep love of history and was an avid reader, quoting from books and the Wall Street Journal up to his last day.

He loved to write, and in 2007, he penned and published his life story, "Memoirs of a Minnesota Physician". A life-long learner, he was always willing to research and start a project of any scope and see it through to completion. Although his ability to travel became limited in recent years, he reflected on many family and international trips and shared in the planning and joy of his children and grandchildren's travels. He will be greatly missed for his ability to heal his patients, serve people, and plan countless family gatherings. He will also be missed for his endless energy and engaging conversations on a wide range of topics. Our father left this world with "so many things I want to do, topping the list is to practice medicine again." The family would like to thank Dr. Shauna Morrow of Park Nicollet Medical Center and all of our father's caregivers for their dedicated care, especially Chelsie Plath, whose special care these past few months brought comfort to our father and peace to our family. Due to restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, a virtual Mass of the Christian Burial will be held at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church at 3 p.m. on April 30, 2020, and can be viewed at www.lourdesmpls.org/lourdes-live. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, One Lourdes Place, Minneapolis, MN 55414, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, 200 University Avenue East, Saint Paul, MN 55101, in honor of children with special needs. Washburn-McReavy.com Davies Chapel 612-377-2203

Tribute Wall

WW

“ Sorry to hear about the passing of your father. My prayers go out to the Wethington family. My best to everyone.
Willie Wimmer TG 81

William Wimmer - May 04, 2020 at 10:48 AM

JB

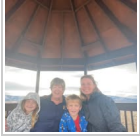
“ Dear Ellen and Family ! Our hearts are broken at the loss of your dad! We loved your mom and dad like our own parents ! They took us under their wings when we moved here and the love they both showed us will never be forgotten! The mass and send off was such a beautiful reflection of our true catholic faith ... We love you all and we grieve the loss of a wonderful loving kind generous man ! Our deepest sympathy to all of you and hope that we can get together after live is resumed ... ❤️❤️❤️❤️ Rick and Josie Bertie and Lindsay and Sean

josie bertie - April 30, 2020 at 05:35 PM

DM

“ I joined Coon Rapids Clinic in 1973 and practiced with Joe for two years. The mark of a great person is that you feel better about yourself after you meet that person! Joe was that person: a great friend and practice partner. He always left you feeling that you were important and he was always interested in how my family was doing. Our deepest sympathy to Ellen and her family but what a blessing to have witnessed him day in and day out!
Dan Janiga

Daniel Janiga, MD, MPH - April 29, 2020 at 07:29 PM



“ So sorry for the loss. Dr. Wethington was our family physician for many years at Coon Rapids Clinic and Mercy Hospital. Mary Rinehart Erickson daughter of Howard and Colleen Rinehart (both deceased) who were founding members of Epiphany also.

Mary Rinehart Erickson - April 29, 2020 at 02:44 PM

DC

“ Dear Ellen & family,
We are sorry for your pain and sadness. Doc was an amazing man and you supported him in every way to be all he was and to accomplish all he did. The obituary was a wonderful summary and tribute to him. Every gift, skill and interest mentioned could have been expanded by dozens of pages and many stories. For being as accomplished as he was he was so unassuming and humble. He exemplified the expression: It's amazing what can be accomplished when one cares little about who gets the credit. It has often been acknowledged that what Fr. Reiser dreamed, Joe knew how to achieve. Epiphany Senior Housing is an example. Doc was President of the Senior Housing Board and oversaw the creation & development of Epiphany Pines Independent Housing. Even after resigning from the board, he continued to offer as much talent, energy and passion to help design and build Epiphany Assisted Living. Neither project would have gone as well without him. He was tireless in his pursuit of anything he put his mind and energy to...and Ellen supported him.
Never shy to show his affection for his wife, at his book signing, someone mentioned the fact to him that behind every good man there is a much better women and that by that standard Ellen was off the charts. Without hesitation his response was: “She is anyway!”
Always humble, always direct, always tactful. He will be missed.
Ellen & Family, Thanks for sharing him so generously.
Dave & Connie Kassing

Dave & Connie - April 29, 2020 at 01:49 PM

DW

I knew one of Dr. Wethingtons daughters , I saw him off and on @ the C R Clinic , and in the time that I worked @ Epiphany ! He was a good man & Dr.

David Weidenhamer - April 29, 2020 at 11:36 PM

RR

“ *I jointed Coon Rapids Clinic in 1970, and Joe was my "partner" for 10 years, sharing our patients while on call or vacations. He was a man of so many talents and interests outside of medicine. His obituary does a wonderful job of detailing these, but didn't mention his dancing talent. He really liked social occasions to demonstrate his talent with Ellen or whoever was available. His contributions to the medical community are too numerous to mention but are remembered by us. Ellen and family, I am sorry for your loss, and know that my prayers and those of my family are with you. Joe was a wonderful MAN.*

Ron Rehmann

RONALD REHMANN - April 27, 2020 at 10:29 AM

PS

“ *Joe & Patty Sidoti send our condolences to the entire Wethington family who were like family to us as we were next door neighbors for many years! Our favorite memory for us, although so many. The one that always brings a smile to our face is when Doc nicknamed Me Joe "Ramon" because when he graciously invited Patty & I over to family gatherings & parties, he would introduce me as Ramon the gardener 😊 that was our special bond! Our thoughts and prayers are with all. Love, Joe & Patty Sidoti The Villages, FL*

patty and joe sidoti - April 26, 2020 at 02:41 PM

LH

“ My condolences to all the Wethington family, especially my former colleague from DCI, Anne, and his lovely wife, Ellen. Dr. Wethington was our family doctor for many years and he was simply the best doctor I have ever been connected to. I also knew him from his years at Epiphany, and always found him to be so caring, generous, intelligent, and a true gentlemen. The world is a little less bright without him, but heaven is richer and he and Father Reiser are together again. May he rest in peace.

Libby Huebner

Libby Huebner - April 26, 2020 at 08:41 AM