



Richard Carlton Woellner

August 17, 1931 - May 5, 2026

Richard Carlton Woellner, MD

Richard Carlton Woellner, MD, a devoted husband, father, physician, naval officer, and community leader, passed away peacefully, leaving behind a legacy of service, compassion, and deep intellectual curiosity.

Dr. Woellner was born on August 17, 1931, in Chicago, Illinois to Robert Carlton Woellner and Elizabeth Hale Woellner. He was raised in Chicago, where he attended the University of Chicago from preschool through college and medical school. He continued his education and residency at the University of Minnesota. He practiced medicine with joint positions at the University of Minnesota VA hospital, Anker Hospital of Ramsey County, and Methodist Hospital, where he was Chief of Staff, and had a distinguished career in medicine.

In the late 1950s, Dr. Woellner served as a researcher and instructor at the U.S. Navy School of Aviation Medicine in Pensacola, Florida. He continued his service as an officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve, achieving the rank of Captain. During his military career, he was recalled to active duty as Acting Chief of Medicine at the US Naval Regional Medical Center in Naples, Italy, and remained committed to naval service for many years, including posts at the Field Medical Service School at Camp Pendleton, Medical Diving School in

Washington, D.C., and the National Defense University; as well as deployments at sea aboard the USS Shreveport, USS Yorktown, and the USS Independence.

Dr. Woellner practiced internal medicine and pulmonology with a special interest in occupational and environmental lung problems for over three decades at St. Louis Park Medical Center/Park Nicollet Medical Center and Methodist Hospital, where he cared deeply for his patients and colleagues. He retired in 1996 after a long and meaningful career. In addition to his clinical work, he authored more than 40 scientific publications and contributed significantly to his field through numerous leadership roles. He served on the Board of Directors of the Hennepin County Health Department, American Lung Association and the American Lung Association of the Upper Midwest, and was a past Chief of Staff of Methodist Hospital, the the Past President of the Minnesota Thoracic Society, the Minneapolis Society of Internal Medicine, and the Metro Senior Physicians Society.

A lifelong learner and engaged citizen, Dr. Woellner was actively involved in his community. He was a longtime member of St. David's Episcopal Church, where he also served on the vestry, Wayzata Yacht Club where he was an avid sailor, and numerous medical associations where he held board positions, actively lobbied, and frequently lectured on reducing public smoking and improving indoor air quality. His work with Dr. Stu Hansen and others played a pivotal role in the banning of smoking in public spaces throughout Minnesota and the nation. He contributed his time to volunteer service as a local and greater Minnesota speaker and media representative to medical, public health, and lay groups, on lung disease, clean air, flu shot programs, and other topics, and as a representative on various health department and research committees.

In addition to his professional life; Dr. Woellner embraced a wide range of

interests. He loved sailing, skiing, canoeing, hiking, and traveling (including all seven continents) with his wife and family. For over 50 years, Dick and Peg enjoyed and actively supported the Minnesota Orchestra, Guthrie Theater, Theater in the Round, and other symphony and civic theaters. Known for his curiosity, extensive knowledge, and warmth, he brought energy and thoughtfulness to everything he pursued.

Dr. Woellner is survived by his beloved wife of 68 years, Margaret Graham Woellner; his children, Elizabeth Woellner Corcoran (Charles Peter Corcoran); Robert Alexander Woellner (Terri-Jo Webster Woellner); and Judith Louise Woellner. He is also survived by his cherished grandchildren, Peter Graham Corcoran, Eric Richard Corcoran, Christine Irene Corcoran, and Margaux Noel Woellner, who will carry forward his legacy of intellectual curiosity, kindness, dedication, and humor.

A funeral service will be held at St. David's Episcopal Church on May 15, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., with a reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that memorial donations be made in Dr. Woellner's name to the Minnesota Orchestra or the American Lung Association of the Upper Midwest.

His life was one of purpose, service, and quiet excellence. He will be deeply missed.

Upcoming Events

Memorial Service

MAY 15. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

St. David's Episcopal Church
13000 St. David Road
Minnetonka, MN 55343

Tribute Wall

JL

“ I know Mr Woellner through Professor Corcoran. Mr Woellner has always been a nice and wonderful person. I remembered so vividly that once i was invited to his place to have dinner, he told me storied about his Navy life. It was so interesting. He was a man with dignity, courage and wisdom. He'll be deeply missed by all!

Jack Liu

Jack Liu - Yesterday at 10:32 PM

BB

“ Barbara B. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Carlton Woellner.

Barbara B. - May 09 at 12:02 PM

SJ

“ So many wonderful fun-filled memories of being with Dick, Peg, Lisa, Bobby, and Judy, especially joining one of your week-long, family canoe-trips in the Boundary Waters!

When I attended college in Minnesota, Dick became “my dad away from home”. He and my father, Joe, had a deep friendship, starting from their college days. Both Dick and my dad were such compassionate and caring human beings, full of life and curiosity, and both had such a great sense of humor. There was a lot of joy in our family, when Dick came to visit. Dick would briefly visit our home in California, when he was doing his Naval Reserve-Training. He would often recite for my brother and me, by memory and with dramatic-filled passion, the “Jabberwocky” poem, which would then fill our home with awe and laughter!

During college, Dick became my “UBER Driver“, picking me up at the airport and driving me back and forth to Northfield, for 4 years, every Fall, Winter, and late Spring!!! In addition, I fell during my first year at college and severely injured my knee. Of course you can guess who then came to my rescue! Dick dropped everything, drove up to my college, picked me up and then drove me back to Minneapolis to be evaluated by one of his orthopedic colleagues. Dick then drove me back to college with my full leg cast and crutches. Dick and the entire Woellner Family were my loving-support during those years and truly became “my family, away from home”.

❤️ Susan Johnson

Susan Johnson - May 08 at 04:22 AM

AA

“ Amino A. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Carlton Woellner.

Amino A. - May 07 at 07:24 PM

CC

“ My father-in-law, Dick Woellner, was also a dear friend...we shared many interests -- Nordic skiing, biking, sailing and canoeing. A lasting memory was when he and I were on a BWCA canoe trip and he tripped on a difficult portage. He laid on the ground, with an 80-pound Duluth pack on his back -- laughing. A metaphor for his boundless optimism and good humor. Dick will be missed but never forgotten.

Charles Corcoran - May 07 at 12:02 PM

MD

“ Marion D. purchased a sympathy card for the family of Richard Carlton Woellner.



Marion D. - May 06 at 08:53 PM