Dr. John Hansbrough

Dr. John Hansbrough was born in Virginia, graduated from the University of Wisconsin with Honors in Chemistry and attended Harvard Medical School where he graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1972. During this time, he began his career in basic science and his M.D. thesis involved the isolation and purification of RNA from lymphoid tissue.

He subsequently completed his internship and general surgery residency at the University of Colorado and then joined its faculty at University of Colorado where he quickly rose to Associate Professor of Surgery while directing the Surgical Intensive Care Unit, the Emergency Department, and the Burn Unit. During this time, he continued his fundamental interest in basic research and was recruited to UCSD in 1984 as Director of the UCSD Burn Center.

For 17 years, he single-handedly developed the UCSD Burn Unit into an internationally recognized center that not only emphasized excellence in care but opened the frontier for describing the immunosuppressive effects of injury, and the challenge of developing wound coverage using artificial skin.

Dr. Hansbrough was instrumental in developing alternative skin substitutes and, after years of collaboration with both NIH, basic scientists, and industry, he was singularly responsible for the development of Dermograft-TC which has become a standard tissue coverage.

During his career, he had continuous extramural funding, served on the editorial board of every major journal related to injury care and participated in visiting professorships throughout the world.

Dr. Hansbrough’s commitment to research was classical. He took clinical problems for which he was directly responsible and aggressively pursued solutions which led to real changes in care. He was truly a renaissance surgeon.

His interests were not limited to clinical care and biology. He was deeply interested in ongoing education and the rehabilitation of the injured patient. During the course of his career, he developed resources including a burn camp for injured children and was awarded the Chancellor’s Associate Award for Community Service at UCSD. In addition, he was visionary in developing a video-based learning center which focused on teaching patients the difficulties of dealing with burn injury and was intimately involved in training residents and peers in the fundamentals of burn care.

As a tribute to his efforts, a CD demonstrating the fundamentals of burn care was distributed to all physicians caring for soldiers placed in harm’s way during the Iraq Gulf War conflict of the 1990s.

John was quiet, but an internally passionate physician. His commitment to his family was the focus of his life. His dedication to the care of the injured patient was amplified because of this.

Dr. Hansbrough’s untimely death left a huge void in the Department of Surgery, throughout UCSD, and in the San Diego community. His loss extended internationally and was recognized by a special award from the American Burn Association. He was in line to become president. John gave of himself much more than he received. He saw this as his responsibility to medicine and to the injured patient. Perhaps this alone is his legacy. Dr. Hansbrough was one of the truly great surgeons of his time.
Robert Sheridan, MD, FACS, FAAP

Robert Sheridan graduated Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and Alpha Omega Alpha from the Boston University 6-year medical program. He attended school with a military scholarship, trained and served as a flight surgeon in Germany, and then completed training in general surgery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He served as a general surgeon in Europe, Central America, and Colorado. He then trained at the Army Institute of Surgical Research (the Army Burn Center) in San Antonio and served as an attending surgeon in burns, trauma, and critical care there. He was assigned to the coalition casualty receiving hospital at Landstuhl Germany as triage officer in support of Operation Desert Storm. Upon completion of his military scholarship obligation he left active duty and joined the Massachusetts General Hospital Division of Burns and Trauma and the Shriners Hospital for Children. During over 20 years at the MGH he has served in a number of positions, including director of the MGH trauma service, co-director of the MGH adult burn center, director of the surgical critical care and burn fellowships, and director of the acute burn service at the Boston Shriners Hospital for Children, which is his current role. He has served part-time as director of the surgical intensive care unit for the Boston VAHealthcare System. He does volunteer work in Central America and other locations, has experience with disaster relief situations, and has received several volunteer and community service awards. He is a Colonel in the Army Reserve and has served in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Dr. Sheridan is certified and recertified in surgery and in surgical critical care and is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, American Association for the Surgery of Trauma, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. He is recent past president of the American Burn Association. He has authored two books and more than 300 journal articles, book chapters, editorials, and on-line resources on burn and trauma care.