
John L. ‘Jack’ Caughey, Jr., M.D., medical education visionary



John Lyon “Jack” Caughey, Jr., M.D., dedicated his career to the concept that the practice of medicine must be a blend of the finest science and compassion in patient care. A giant in medical education, he put these concepts into motion in Cleveland by helping to develop a revolutionary curriculum and by selecting for admission compassionate, well-rounded students for enrollment in the School of Medicine at what was known as Western Reserve University and later as Case Western Reserve University.



Dr. Caughey (pronounced 'koi) died Sept. 4 at the St. Agnes Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Ellicott City, Md. He was 97. He had suffered a stroke in March and decided to move from Cleveland to Maryland at the end of July to be closer to his family.



Born May 30, 1904, in Rochester, N.Y., Dr. Caughey graduated from high school in Glen Falls, N.Y., in 1920; he earned a degree in history, cum laude, at Harvard College in 1925, a medical degree at Harvard Medical School in 1930, and a doctor of medical science degree at Columbia University in 1935.



After medical school, he was an intern and resident at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center (1930 to 1937), then an instructor and associate in medicine (1937 to 1945) at Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. During World War II, he was a technical aide on the Committee on Medical Research for the Office of Scientific Research and Development in Washington, D.C.

During this time, Dr. Caughey got to know well Joseph T. Wearn, M.D., a former Harvard faculty member who had become a professor of medicine at what was then called the Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland. They were part of a group of men that, away from home because of the war, met for dinners filled with lively discussions about the state of medical education and how they would improve upon it.

In 1945, after the war, Dr. Wearn became dean at the



WRU School of Medicine and recruited Dr. Caughey to serve as the Cleveland school's first assistant dean and also as assistant professor of medicine. Dr. Caughey also began to practice at University Hospitals of Cleveland.

Dr. Wearn "recognized in Caughey an unusual sensitivity and perceptivity toward the human condition. ...He thought Caughey would be good with students," wrote Greer Williams in *Western Reserve's Experiment in Medical Education and Its Outcome* (Oxford University Press, 1980). It was time for Drs. Wearn and Caughey to act on their lively discussions.

Dr. Wearn, Dr. Caughey and T. Hale Ham, M.D., were leaders in the development of a revised curriculum launched in 1952 and widely credited with initiating changes in medical education across the country and around the world. The new curriculum integrated the basic and clinical sciences, introduced students to the clinical environment almost immediately in the first year (previously, students did not interact with patients until the third year of medical school), encouraged educators to treat students as junior colleagues rather than use fear of failure as motivation, and through a new evaluation system promoted cooperation among students instead of competition. These concepts were revolutionary at the time.

"We were trying to switch from a pedantic, memorization type of education to a problem-solving mode in which students were treated like graduate students," Dr. Caughey said in a 1993 interview. "We felt a connection exists between how you educate physicians and how they treat their patients." The Association of American Medical Colleges later honored the three visionaries with the prestigious Abraham Flexner Award for distinguished service to medical education.

Dr. Caughey went on to become an associate dean and associate professor, then a dean and professor, at the medical school. All the while, he promoted the inclusion of non-science majors, older students with previously established careers outside of medicine, and other non-traditional students in the medical school's classes. These students, he believed, also possessed qualities that would make them good physicians.

He retired in 1974 and assumed the titles of dean emeritus of student affairs and professor emeritus of medicine and medical education. May 12, 1974, was designated as "Caughey Day" – alumni came to honor him in person, and hundreds of others wrote him to express their gratitude.

From the time of his arrival in Cleveland until his retirement in 1974, Dr. Caughey served as the primary interviewer of prospective medical students and, except for a brief period right after he retired, he continued interviewing students through the class entering in 1995. The last medical students interviewed by him graduated from the medical school in 1999.

Among the medical school graduates admitted during his tenure were 1994 Nobel laureate Alfred Gilman, M.D., Ph.D., 1998 Nobel laureate Ferid Murad, M.D., Ph.D., and David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D., U.S. surgeon general from 1998 to 2002, as well as countless others now shaping medical education as leaders in academic medicine and those making a difference through their work in private practices, hospitals and other settings.

In addition to continuing to interview medical students, Dr. Caughey volunteered his time in retirement, in 1975, to help organize what became the school's Department of Family Medicine, and he served on several committees for professional organizations.

In 1992, Dr. Caughey received a special recognition award from the president of the Medical Alumni Association of the CWRU School of Medicine.

In 1996, the CWRU School of Medicine dedicated the John L. Caughey, Jr., M.D., Center for the Integration of Science and Medical Care. It includes medical education offices and a 196-seat auditorium, all in support of innovative medical education programs. The school's student lounge also carries his name.

Also in 1996, the school's Medical Alumni Association presented Dr. Caughey with its Special Board of Trustees Service Award, an award given periodically "to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the field of medicine."

In 1998, Dr. Caughey was inducted into the Cleveland Medical Hall of Fame. Also that year, the Group on Student Affairs (GSA) of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) presented a Special Recognition Award to Dr. Caughey "for his leadership and wisdom in guiding medical school administrators in the formation of the GSA." Dr. Caughey had argued successfully with the Council of Deans to create the GSA, and it became the first separate professional development

group within the AAMC. He had served as national chair for the GSA's first 10 years, from 1956 to 1966. The group's mission has been to examine issues related to the academic and personal development of medical students. During Dr. Caughey's tenure as national chair, the group began to survey medical students to determine their attitudes about application procedures and recommended that medical school applicants be informed of their Medical College Admissions Test scores.

The GSA was one of several national capacities in which Dr. Caughey served. He was chair of the Perinatal Research Committee of the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness and chair of the Advisory Committee on Scientific Publications of the National Library of Medicine, U.S. Public Health Service. He served on committees for the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, the National Advisory Council on Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Task Force on Comprehensive Health Care of the National Commission on Community Health Services. He was a member of the American Medical Association's ad hoc Committee on Education for Family Practice, was a member-at-large of the National Board of Medical Examiners, and was a consultant to the Medical Advisory Council of the Department of Defense. He also was active on several health-related committees in the Cleveland area.

Dr. Caughey is survived by his only son, John L. Caughey III, Ph.D., chair and professor of American studies at the University of Maryland, and a daughter-in-law, J. Patricia Martin, Ph.D., of Columbia, Md. He also is survived by four grandchildren: Thomas D. Caughey, M.D. (Elaine), of Cambridge, Mass., John S. "Jack" Caughey (Jessica), a teacher in Berkeley, Calif., Sarah M. Caughey, a sophomore at Syracuse University, and Ananda Martin-Caughey, a fifth-grader in Columbia, Md.

The family suggests that those wishing to make memorial contributions do so to the John L. Caughey, Jr., M.D., Center for the Integration of Science and Medical Care, c/o Office of Development, CWRU School of Medicine, 10900 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44106-4923.