

Mortimer Buckley Jr. MD College of the Holy Cross class of 1954 exemplifies the ideals of a Jesuit education. This is the story of the Irish who came to this country and used faith-based education to make a life for themselves and their children. This is the cultural rock on which the College of the Holy Cross was founded. The college is much more diversified today, but this was our beginning.



MORTIMER J. BUCKLEY, JR., A.B. 15 Otsego Road \WORCESTER 9, MASS. Day Students' Sodality 1, 2, 3, Vice-Prefect 4, Dean's List 2, 3, 4, Junior Council; Freshman Debating; SOS; Intramurals 1, 2, 3, 4; Purple Patcher Circulation Co-Manager 4; Outing Club 1, 4; Worcester Club 1, 2, 3, Executive Council 4. Senior Thesis: Development of Bone

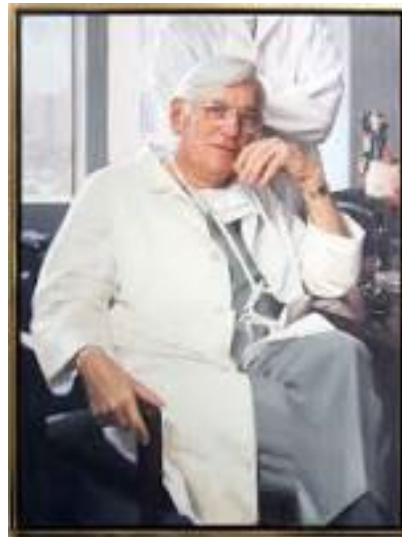
Mort as I called him was first my friend. We saw in each other many commonalities. Both of us were graduates of the College of the Holy Cross, and both of us, as boys, lived in Worcester. We even lived on the same street Otsego Rd. in Worcester. Many in my family history were first-generation Irish from Worcester who attended Holy Cross in the early twentieth Century. Many of the next generation were all Holy Cross graduates.

I spent almost a full year on the Cardiac Surgery Service during my surgical residency at the MGH. I was a Junior Resident, Senior Resident, and Cardio Thoracic Resident at the Mount Auburn Hospital. Mort was my teacher; Mort was my mentor. In many ways, he was like a father to me with his caring for my welfare. Was I unique? NO!! Mort was this to all MGH Surgery Residents who came his way.

Mort taught me about spirituality in the Operating Room, He thought me to be strong, aggressive, and humble at the same time. We laughed about the events when he sent me in to obtain informed consent from John Wayne. We languished at the bedside trying to control the cardiac physiology of a dying patient. We succeeded more than we failed. Mort taught me all I knew about complex thoraco-abdominal aortic surgery. He was instrumental in turning me into the surgeon I became.



Surgical Resident



Professor of Surgery

Excerpts from Harvard and the Massachusetts General Hospital tribute to Mortimer Buckley Jr. MD Cary W. Akins, chairperson W. Gerald Austen Willard M. Daggett, Jr. Bruce W. Lytle

Dr. Buckley did all of his surgical training at the Massachusetts General Hospital. During his general surgical residency, he spent two years participating in a clinical and research fellowship in the Clinic of Heart Surgery at the National Institutes of Health, where he worked with Dr. Andrew Glenn Morrow. Dr. Buckley returned to the MGH to complete his surgical training, finishing in 1966. He immediately joined the cardiac surgical staff at the MGH and the faculty at HMS, and remained with these institutions for the rest of his professional career until his retirement in 1998. During that career, he also helped to initiate or expand cardiac surgical programs at the Beth Israel Hospital, Mount Auburn Hospital, University of Massachusetts in Worcester, and University of Athens, Greece.

Dr. Mortimer J. Buckley, MJB to those on the cardiac surgical service at the Massachusetts General Hospital, and Mort to his friends, was a cardiac surgical legend and a complex personality. Until his final illness, he was physically imposing, could be intellectually and professionally intimidating, and socially charming. The timing of Mortimer Buckley's life, what

he inherited from his parents and the skills he developed placed him in the enviable position of having the privilege and the capacity to be one of the true pioneers who helped to guide the rapid growth of cardiac surgery as a specialty.

Professionally Mortimer Buckley combined raw intelligence, a prodigious memory, great technical facility, tenacity in the care of patients, an unbelievable work ethic, and absolute dedication to teaching with an inability to accept anything less than the complete commitment of his residents to learning and the total dedication of the staff to the welfare of the patients. For over thirty years he was relentless in his devotion to teaching residents to become cardiac surgeons and equally demanding in what he expected in return. While Mort could make accommodations for lesser degrees of intelligence or native surgical skills, he accepted nothing less than a resident's absolute best efforts to try to be perfect – no cutting corners, no half-hearted attempts, only total involvement. Mort abhorred wasted talent.

As Chief of the MGH Cardiac Surgical Unit, Dr. Buckley was a leader who had a vision for MGH cardiac surgery. He would confront cardiology, nursing, anesthesia, the department of surgery, the hospital administration, the state government or anyone else if he felt that it would benefit the MGH cardiac surgical program. In that process MJB earned, in turn, the loyalty of operating room nurses, perfusionists and cardiac intensive care and floor nurses, scores of who remained on the service for decades to work alongside Dr. Buckley and the rest of the team. The intensity of life on the cardiac surgical service was frequently broken with humor and good times. People worked hard and played hard. A defined mission and shared sense of purpose bred camaraderie.

As a scientist, Dr. Buckley was an early innovator in the application of mechanical circulatory support, contributing to the development of the intra-aortic balloon pump and its clinical application to treat acutely ischemic and failing hearts. Along with his colleagues of that time, particularly Eldred Mundth and Willard Daggett, under the guidance of W. Gerald Austen, he pioneered the surgical treatment of cardiogenic shock and the mechanical complications of acute myocardial infarction.

Excerpts from the Harvard Gazette

Outside of medicine one could see a different personal side to Mort Buckley, including his ability to be the world's most charming raconteur. He had a well-honed Irish sense of humor and loved to tell stories. When not in the operating room, Mort Buckley enjoyed tennis and golf, but was his happiest out at sea, sailing with his family. As a host, he was kind, generous and deferential.



Mort Buckley was totally devoted to his family. He adored Marilyn, his wife of forty-five years, who unfailingly supported him through the countless long days and late nights required to build and sustain a premier cardiac surgical program in Boston. Mort took immense pride in the success of his children – Kathleen, Deirdre, Kara and Tim. For all of the joy he gained from their accomplishments, he was even more proud of the people they had become. In later years Mort equally loved his ten grandchildren and their diverse personalities.





Tim, Kara, Deirdre and Kathleen with Mom



The Grandchildren

Mort's religion was very important to him; he was a Knight of Malta, a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre and a lifelong supporter of the Church. (also a Purple Knight of the College of the Holy Cross: cjm) Mort once told one of his daughters that if he had not instilled in her the importance of her religious faith, then he had failed as a parent.

During the height of Dr. Buckley's career he was often described as being "larger than life." Considering the success of his family, the scores of cardiac surgeons he trained who have gone on to great accomplishment and their continued dissemination of his teachings; we might argue that Dr. Mortimer J. Buckley's legacy is even larger than death.

He also helped to initiate or expand cardiac surgical programs at the Beth Israel Hospital, Mount Auburn Hospital, University of Massachusetts in Worcester, and University of Athens, Greece.

Respectfully submitted,

Cary W. Akins, chairperson W. Gerald Austen Willard M. Daggett, Jr. Bruce W. Lytle