

Ronald A. MacKenzie, DO – 1938-2022

Mark A. Warner, MD



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On August 21, 2022, ASA and the specialty of anesthesiology lost a great leader, beloved mentor and teacher, unwavering patient advocate, and generous friend who represented our profession at the highest level in every aspect of his long and storied career.

Ronald Alexander MacKenzie was born March 31, 1938, in Detroit, Michigan. He was the youngest of four children. His two brothers, James D. MacKenzie and Kenneth MacKenzie, his beloved sister Evelyn Sienkiewicz, and his parents Elizabeth and James MacKenzie preceded him in death. His parents hailed from the Highlands of Scotland, and although born in Detroit, he was exceptionally proud of his Scottish heritage.

After finishing secondary school at Cass Tech High School in Detroit, Dr. MacKenzie attended Alma College in Alma, Michigan. He subsequently matriculated to the University of Health Sciences in Kansas City, Missouri, graduating in 1967. After a short time in private general practice in rural southeastern Michigan, he became a resident in anesthesiology in Detroit, as well as at the Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic.

Dr. MacKenzie joined the Mayo Clinic staff in 1974 and served in its Department of Anesthesiology in a variety of leadership roles, including 11 years as its vice chair. He was highly regarded by his colleagues and residents. He was voted the department's Teacher of the Year on multiple occasions. He retired in 2017 after 43 years of providing

care for thousands of patients, working closely with great colleagues in many of the health care professions within Mayo Clinic, and being a role model to hundreds of anesthesia residents, fellows, and student nurse anesthetists, as well as his junior colleagues. He was a remarkably kind, gracious, and empathetic friend to everyone he met.

Dr. MacKenzie made significant contributions to the specialty of anesthesiology. He was president of the Minnesota Society of Anesthesiologists in 1991

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and of ASA in 2000. He also was honored with election to the Academy of Anesthesiologists in recognition of his steadfast dedication to improving the care of anesthetized patients, communication with their families and loved ones, and his exemplary contributions to the education of physician trainees in the specialty.

He married his college sweetheart Nancy Vogan on August 25, 1962. They were inseparable thereafter. Their marriage ended abruptly with his death just days shy of 60 years. He is survived by Nancy, his daughter Dr. Margaret MacKenzie (John Steritz), and son Dr. James MacKenzie. He was much adored by his many nieces and nephews.

Like his ancestral explorationist kin Alexander MacKenzie, Ronald Alexander MacKenzie took great delight in visiting the wonders of North America, including frequent trips to Alaska. Truly a world traveler, Ron made journeys to view the dramatic landscapes and wildlife of Antarctica, Africa, and, of course, Scotland, in addition to many more exotic global locales. Besides all the wonderful lessons and memories shared on these expeditions, he brought home some magnificent pho-



Dr. MacKenzie and his wife Nancy at Four Daughters Vineyard & Winery in Spring Valley, Minnesota, in July 2022.

tographs. An avid photographer, Ron showed the same tireless enthusiasm, preparation, attention to technical detail and practical execution to photography that he displayed during his long career in anesthesiology. He especially enjoyed taking pictures of birds. He enjoyed sailing with Nancy, and twilight cruising in their convertible during many of their evenings in retirement.

Dr. MacKenzie made friends throughout his life and continued to show everyone he met the same respect he would extend to his most esteemed medical friends. A generous spirit, and exposed early on to the fragility of life, Ron wisely made the most of his 84 years and all of his full and busy days. He will be remembered by all who knew him for his inspiring example for excellence and good company. ■



(From left to right) Former ASA presidents Drs. Mark Warner, J.P. Abenstein, and Ronald MacKenzie at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, in 2015. Photo courtesy of Mary Ellen Warner, MD.

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Annenberg Professor of Anesthesiology, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science, Rochester, Minnesota. He was ASA President in 2011.