Obituary

Thomas C. Hall, MD, FACP:
In Memoriam

Edgar M. Moran

Thomas Christopher Hall, one of the founders of American medical oncology, teacher, and researcher, left this life in his ninety-third year. Tom was born in New York City, and had a difficult childhood growing up in the time of the Depression.

Tom excelled academically, and his life changed dramatically when he was accepted as a student at Harvard College and then at Harvard Medical School. He recalled with gratitude the scholarships that made it possible for him to get his education at Harvard. He received his medical degree magna cum laude from Harvard Medical School in 1949.

Upon graduation, Tom began his long career of medical research, teaching (for nearly 15 years at Harvard Medical School), practicing medical oncology, and founding/directing new cancer care centers at the University of Rochester, the University of Southern California, the Cancer Control Agency of British Columbia in Vancouver, the University of Hawaii, and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He retired in 1992 and moved to Bellingham, WA, where he volunteered his medical service to the community while continuing his research on SWOG studies on prostate cancer.

Tom wrote more than 200 scientific articles, 43 chapters in medical books, and eight medical textbooks and monographs. He introduced the term “paraneoplastic syndromes.” As a young academic pathologist, I was influenced by his article on combination therapy for adult myelogenous leukemia (AML), which was published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1963. This was one of the first effective treatments of AML that made me see hope and helped me decide to switch my specialty to medical oncology. Later on, Tom and I became life-long friends.

Tom was a highly respected and admired teacher at many institutions as a professor or invited guest lecturer. He was a founding father of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and one of the first academic hematologists involved in the American Society of Hematology. In 1975, Tom became the Editor-in-Chief of the journal Medical and Pediatric Oncology, and he continued in this position for a number of years.

A life dedicated to medical science and teaching cannot be justly summarized in a few paragraphs. One wants to emphasize the most important facts of Tom Hall’s life. A highly respected American medical oncologist called Tom Hall “one of the great thinkers in medical oncology.” Tom had a passionate interest in understanding the biologic processes of life, disease, and cancer. He trained two generations of medical oncologists and gave to medical science the best of what he was endowed with. Happy is the man who can look back at his life and say, “I have been there, and it mattered.”

Tom is survived by his wife of 36 years, Lorina Hall; his children, Chrissy, Tam, Seth, Amity (Chris), Bronwen, Nathan, Jinny, and Nicholas; his grandchildren, Jacob (Maya), Monty, April (Steve), Ian, Jerusha, Khepri (Bobby), Jake (Heather), and Nathan Jr (Michelle); and his great grandchildren, Adam, Thane, Theia, Aksil, Elijah, Mary Sophia, Greyson, and Penny.

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doi: 10.1158/1078-0432.CCR-14-2655
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Received October 14, 2014; accepted October 14, 2014; published online December 1, 2014.
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