



October 21, 1994

Dear Friends and Associates of Dr. Raymond M. Curtis:

A memorial service for Dr. Raymond M. Curtis will be held in Baltimore, Maryland on Saturday, November 12, 1994, 11:00 a.m., at Roland Park Presbyterian Church, 4801 Roland Avenue.

Dr. Raymond M. Curtis, who was 80, passed away on Monday, October 10, 1994, in Mount Vernon, Washington.

Dr. Curtis' family has asked that in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions be made to the Raymond M. Curtis Hand Center, The Union Memorial Hospital, 201 East University Parkway, Baltimore, MD 21218.

Cordially,

Gaylord L. Clark, M.D.

GLC/tw



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# Dr. Raymond Curtis, 80, hand surgery pioneer

By Fred Rasmussen  
Sun Staff Writer

Dr. Raymond Miller Curtis, a pioneering hand surgeon who founded the internationally known center that bears his name at Union Memorial Hospital, died Sunday of prostate cancer at the Mira Vista Nursing Home in Mount Vernon, Wash. He was 80.

"He was in the pioneering group that developed hand surgery during World War II," recalled Dr. E. F. Shaw Wilgis, who studied with Dr. Curtis and later succeeded him as chief of hand surgery at Union Memorial.

"He was one of the visionaries and leaders in developing the specialty. The field of reconstructive surgery was opened up and its principles laid down by people like him," said Dr. Wilgis, who worked with Dr. Curtis to establish the hand center.

Before the war, Dr. Curtis had completed a residency in general surgery at what was then University of Maryland Hospital. There, he had become friends with Dr. George Bennett of the Johns Hopkins University and Dr. J. M. T. Finney of Union Memorial, who asked him to bring his specialty to Baltimore in 1947 as chief of hand surgery at Union Memorial.

The need for Dr. Curtis' skills became obvious.

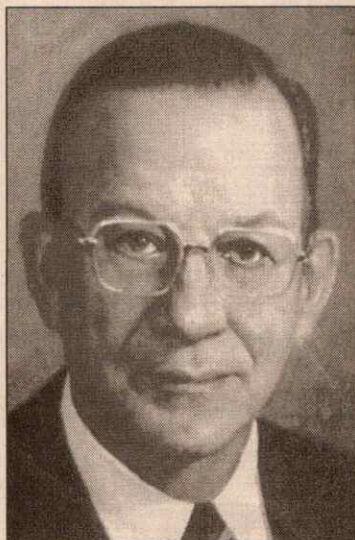
"Obviously, hand injuries weren't limited to casualties in the military," Dr. Curtis said in a 1980 interview in *The Sun*. "At least 25 percent of all industrial accidents involve the hand, whether it's amputation, crushing, fracturing, burns, tendon and nerve injuries or joint dislocations.

"Economically, hand injuries are the most costly of all, representing billions of dollars, if you include lost time from work."

The hand center, which also provides physical and occupational rehabilitation, was established in the 1960s.

In 1976, in collaboration with engineer John Engalitcheff Jr., founder and retired chairman of Baltimore Aircoil Co., Dr. Curtis developed a rehabilitative tool for hand surgery patients called a work simulator.

The electromechanical device has various tools designed to simulate the basic motions required of the hand and upper extremity in daily activities and most occupations.



1992 PHOTO

**Dr. Raymond Curtis founded center at Union Memorial Hospital in the 1960s.**

Dr. Wilgis said that Dr. Curtis, who retired in 1982, treated more than 40,000 patients.

He remembered Dr. Curtis as "very concentrated and quiet in the operating room. He didn't talk about the procedure and would only do so afterwards. He was very humble, unselfish and was never interested in any self-aggrandizement. He was only interested in the further development of his specialty."

Dr. Curtis was born and reared in Jefferson City, Mo., the son of a local politician. He graduated from the University of Missouri and earned his medical degree from the New York University College of Medicine in 1939.

He served in the Army Medical Corps as chief of hand service at McCornack Hospital in Pasadena, Calif., and at Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco. He was discharged in 1947 with the rank of major.

He traveled in Europe, South America and Asia training other surgeons in hand surgery techniques.

Plans for a memorial service in Baltimore were incomplete.

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, the former Ann M. Olson; four sons, Randall Curtis of Bellingham, Wash., Gary Curtis of Bedford, Mass., Benson Curtis of Seattle and Richard Curtis of Princeton, N.J.

Memorial donations may be made to the hand center.