



Ruth Heyn M.D, age 96, died Wednesday, December 26, 2018 at Saline Evangelical Home following a fall at her own home. She was born October 19, 1922 in Saginaw, MI, the daughter of Arthur and Olga (Zeman) Heyn. Ruth received her Bachelor of Science degree, magna cum laude, from the University of Toledo in 1943 followed by an M.D. degree from the University of Chicago in 1947 where she was one of five women in her class. She interned at Blodgett Memorial Hospital in Grand Rapids followed by a residency in Pediatrics and a one year fellowship in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at Bob Roberts Memorial Hospital at the University of Chicago. In 1951 she was appointed an instructor in Pediatrics at the University of Michigan and accepted an assistant professorship in the Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases in 1958. She was appointed to associate professor in 1964 and rose to the rank of Professor in 1970. From 1958 to 1982, she also served as director of the Section of Hematology-Oncology in the Department of Pediatrics, a very demanding post at a critical time in the development of this field. In addition, from 1962 to 1965, she served as director of pediatrics at Wayne County General Hospital.

A highly respected teacher with a quick, incisive wit, she led students at all levels to better thinking through her penetrating questions and comments. She demanded and received excellence from those about her by giving it herself. The marked esteem and respect in which she is held by her many students, house officers, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty colleagues were earned by her adherence to the highest principles of medical practice and by her careful, questioning approach to medical thinking. These intellectual traits were complemented and perhaps even surpassed by her compassion for and strong dedication to the patients in her care and the careful, thoroughly weighed and humane manner in which she treated them. Her patients and their parents are among her strongest admirers.

Dr. Heyn was a pioneer in a field which had undergone revolutionary developments during her

career. As a physician with expertise in hematology, particularly the care of patients with coagulation defects, she helped to introduce exchange transfusions for newborns to the Medical Center. But she is best known for her work with patients who had leukemia and cancerous disorders. Dr. Heyn was an active investigator in the national group whose work produced a change in the prognosis for the disease of childhood leukemia from being universally fatal to having many cures.

The Regents saluted this distinguished faculty member for her numerous contributions as clinician, scholar, and teacher by naming Ruth M. Heyn Professor Emerita of Pediatrics in 1988. In 2006, an anonymous donor endowed the Ruth Heyn Professorship in Pediatric Oncology in honor of this pioneering and revered University of Michigan physician and she was honored at the University of Michigan in 2009. Her major contributions have primarily impacted on the diagnosis and treatment of children with rhabdomyosarcoma. She published multiple studies and was one of three leaders of the inner group rhabdomyosarcoma study. In 1966, Dr. Heyn authored the first manuscript on the use of Vincristine in the treatment of childhood leukemia.

Her clinical research has impacted on improved outcome and survival for children with cancer. Dr. Heyn was also one of the founding members of the Children's Cancer Group, which merged with the Pediatric Oncology Group in 2000 to form the Children's Oncology Group. She has held membership in several societies including the American Society of Hematology, American Pediatric Society, American Society of Clinical Oncology, and the American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. As one of her colleagues wrote, "Ruth was a great mentor to myself and so many others; further she was very kind to thousands of children with cancer and other life-threatening conditions. We have missed her here at C. S. Mott Children's Hospital and will continue to miss her."

In addition to her dedication to the University of Michigan, Ruth was a Master Gardener and enjoyed spending time in her own garden as well as her younger sister's flower and vegetable garden. She volunteered at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens in her retirement and especially enjoyed caring for the Bonsai. Ruth was an avid bird watcher and cared deeply about conservation. She traveled extensively around the world, had several travelling companions, but spoke fondly of the times she was able to travel with her mother. Throughout her life she read extensively. Ruth loved art and visited many museums in her life and even took art lessons as a child at the Toledo Museum of Art. She also perfected knitting and quilting. Ruth gave generously as she annually supported 30 plus organizations. Ruth maintained many friendships throughout her life and was a member of Zion Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor, for over 50 years.

Ruth was preceded in death by her parents, an infant brother, Robert, two sisters, Betty Kahl and Carol Savage, as well as one nephew, Douglas Kahl. Survivors include her niece Jan Hannah and her husband, Steve Hannah who cared for her the past 10 plus years, her nephews, Allan (Monica) Kahl, John (Jeannie) Savage, her brother-in-law, John Savage, and several great-nieces and great-nephews.

A Celebration of her life will be held at Zion Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor, MI on Saturday, April 13, 2019 with visitation beginning at 10:00 AM, followed by the service at 11:00 AM.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens (mbgna-tributes@umich.edu or 734.647.7847) or University of Michigan Pediatric Cancer Research Fund – 320719 – Ruth Heyn.