

In Memoriam:

**Mavis P. Kelsey, Sr.**(1912–2013)

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**M**avis Parrott Kelsey was born in Deport, Texas, on 7 October 1912. His parents owned a hardware store in rural Texas. He grew up with no electricity, running water, or sewer service until the mid-1920s. Dr. Kelsey believed that these early experiences enabled him to build discipline and toughness, all of which served him well in his later career.

Dr. Kelsey's grandfather was a physician who inspired him to go into medicine. After graduating from Texas A&M College in 1932 with a BS degree, Mavis Kelsey entered The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston, receiving his MD in 1936. He served on the junior staff of Scott & White Clinic in Temple, Texas, from 1938 through 1939, and he married Mary Randolph Wilson during that time. Subsequently, he entered

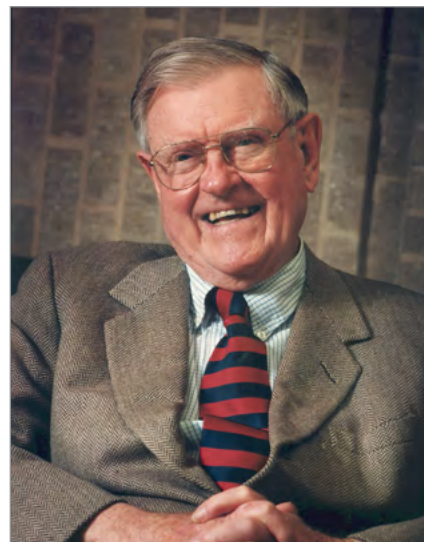
into a 3-year fellowship in Internal Medicine at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. However, his training was interrupted by the United States' entry into World War II. Among other assignments, he served as flight surgeon of the 11th Fighter Command in Alaska and editor-in-chief of *The Air Surgeon's Bulletin*. He attained the rank of lieutenant colonel and was awarded a Legion of Merit medal in 1945 for "exceptionally meritorious conduct."

Dr. Kelsey completed his medical training at the Mayo Clinic at 34 years of age, and he was appointed to the staff at the Mayo Clinic. Two years later, he and his wife decided to move to Houston, where he would help to establish the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic, modeled after the Mayo Clinic. He was asked to develop MD Anderson's clinical isotope program, because he had the first license in Houston from the Atomic Energy Commission to administer radioisotopes for the evaluation and treatment of patients with hyperthyroidism and thyroid cancer. He gave the first dose of radioiodine to a patient in Houston in 1949.

In 1950, Dr. Kelsey encouraged Dr. William Leary, an internist, and Dr. William Seybold, a general surgeon, to establish a clinic in Houston under their joint names. They envisioned a general clinic with specialty care. After several name changes and iterations, the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic moved into new facilities at 6624 Fannin Street, where the 29-story St. Luke's Medical Tower stands today. The clinic expanded to include more than 150 doctors, thousands of patients, and several satellite clinics throughout the Houston area.

Dr. Kelsey retired in February 1986. During his career, he received the Ashbel Smith Distinguished Alumnus Award from UTMB, was named Houston's Aggie of the Year in 1988 by the Houston A&M Club, and was named a Fellow of the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic.

In 1999, the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic moved into its state-of-the-art main campus at 2727 Holcombe, near the Texas Medical Center. By then, Dr. Kelsey had estab-



*Mavis P. Kelsey, Sr., MD*

*Photograph courtesy of Kelsey-Seybold Clinic.*

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lished his vision of combining the expertise of specialists with the close, personal care of a family physician. During his senior years, he continued to write on subjects of historical interest. One of his books was a fascinating autobiography in which he described life in East Texas during the early years of the 20th century. He also compiled a book of photographs and histories of county courthouses in Texas. At the time of his death, he was recording anecdotes in use as verbal expressions in Texas. He maintained his mental capacity until he died on 12 November 2013.

Physicians, staff, and patients at the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic mourn the loss of their co-founder and friend who lived to 101 years of age. Dr. Mavis Kelsey is remembered within the Texas Medical Center as a

medical pioneer, educator, and physician who brought collaborative healthcare to benefit patients with various diseases. Beginning in his small office in the Texas Medical Center, he changed the manner in which medical care was delivered and lived to see the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic become a major force in health care in Houston and the southwestern United States.

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