



## A Legacy That Will Forever Foster Learning



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hen he was a young boy, Edward Raffensperger, M.D. '40, asked his mother: "What would you do if you had a million dollars?" She answered immediately, "I'd give it away!"

Dr. Raffensperger often shared this story, pointing out that he heeded his mother's advice. When he passed away at the age of 95 in October 2009, Dr. Raffensperger's dedication and commitment to School of Medicine students were amply demonstrated. His bequest created the Mary Ames and Edward Cowell Raffensperger Scholarship Fund. This endowed fund carries the name of Dr. Raffensperger and his wife, a highly respected pediatrician, who died in 1983. She was herself a pioneer in medicine and she shared Dr. Raffensperger's devotion to student aid.

The majority of Dr. Raffensperger's estate was designated to the School of Medicine, ensuring that our brightest and most talented students continue to receive a stellar education. He frequently spoke of promoting excellence through Penn's students and this fund will fulfill his wish.

During his lifetime, Dr. Raffensperger left an indelible mark on his field of gastroenterology as well as on the School of Medicine. In 1962, he joined the staff of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and quickly rose to the rank of full professor. He became emeritus professor in 1985. Known for his kindness and compassion, Dr. Raffensperger was much beloved by his patients, who filled his office with letters and gifts. He was also a loyal alumnus who fondly remembered the delight he felt when he learned that he had been accepted to the School of Medicine.

This affection for Penn and its students was deeply felt and steadfast. Through the vehicle of planned giving, Dr. Raffensperger wanted to make sure his generosity would benefit his beloved alma mater for years to come. He will always be remembered for this lasting legacy and the giving spirit that guided him throughout his rich life.

Dr. Raffensperger chose one of a multitude of creative gift opportunities that benefit both the School of Medicine and donors. As you plan your financial future, the Office of Planned Giving is ready to assist in developing an appropriate strategy to incorporate your charitable objectives. Contact Christine S. Ewan, J.D., director of Planned Giving, at 215-898-9486 or you can e-mail Christine at [cewan@upenn.edu](mailto:cewan@upenn.edu). For more information, please visit the web site at [www.med.upenn.planyourlegacy.org](http://www.med.upenn.planyourlegacy.org).

## Obituary for Dr. Edward C. Raffensperger

Dr. Edward C. Raffensperger was born July 9, 1914. He received a B.S. from Dickinson College in 1936 and M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in 1940. He completed his residency at the Graduate Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania after which he served in the Air Force in WWII as a flight surgeon. He rose to the rank of Lt. Captain. He returned from the war to do his fellowship in gastroenterology at the Graduate Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania with Dr. Henry Bockus whom many consider the father of clinical gastroenterology. He then set up a highly successful practice at the Polyclinic in Harrisburg from 1948-1962 but was then recruited back to serve as the lead clinical gastroenterologist at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania where he has remained. In his tenure at Penn, Dr. Raffensperger held many important positions. He was chairman of the medical board and the school admissions committee and served on numerous other important committees. He rose to the rank of full professor and recently became emeritus. He received many awards over the years including the Distinguished Alumni Award at Dickinson College where he also served as a Trustee since 1958.

Dr. Raffensperger's greatest gifts, however, were in his philanthropy, his teaching and his patient care. He along with his wife, Mary Ames Raffensperger (deceased), a pioneer in rehabilitative medicine at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, established a generous fund in that area at CHOP. He was a valued benefactor and trustee and distinguished alumnus at his beloved Dickinson College. At Penn, he established an important endowment for educational funding of medical students. Dr. Raffensperger commonly quoted his mother who when asked by a young Ed, what would you do if you had a million dollars, she gleefully replied, "I'd give it away." Clearly, he was greatly influenced by her advice. Dr. Raffensperger was a great teacher. Students, residents and fellows always competed to be on his rotations. He trained several generations of gastroenterologists, many of whom went on to national and international fame. Examples in our area Dr. Anthony J. Dimarino, the Rohrer Professor of Medicine at Chairman of Gastroenterology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and Dr. William Lipschutz, Chief of Gastroenterology at Pennsylvania Hospital. He was warm and caring yet a taskmaster at the same time, demanding clinical excellence and integrity from all he trained. Fortunately, Dr. Raffensperger practiced what he preached and was known all his life as the clinician's clinician. For many years, he was the gastroenterologist for Philadelphia's elite and Penn's faculty. He was always referred the most challenging cases which he always handled with aplomb. It is no surprise there is a yearly conference at Penn in his name in which the most difficult cases from medical schools in the Delaware Valley are presented and discussed. Dr. Raffensperger was no elitist, however. True to his small town background in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania and in the footsteps of his forthright, honest and egalitarian parents he treated all people and patients with equal respect and dignity. He was truly loved by all his patients who filled his office with letters and gifts. Even in his high place of achievement, Dr. Raffensperger always remained a student. He was a world wide traveler and voracious reader, particularly of history. Even at 95 years of age, he kept abreast of the latest breakthroughs in the medical journals. He was an avid sports fan particularly of the Phillies, the Eagles and the Penn football team. He played squash well into his 70's at which time, rumor had it,

he could still beat some members of the Penn Squash Team. Most importantly, Dr. Raffensperger was a lovely man. He was kind to all and always practiced the ever important Golden Rule which he commonly quoted.

Dr. Raffensperger lost his first wife, Mary Ames Raffensperger, to cancer in 1983. He is survived by generations of friends, students, colleagues and patients. A memorial service will be held at the University of Pennsylvania with time to be determined. Contributions in Dr. Raffensperger's name may be made to the Mary Ames Raffensperger and Edward Cowell Raffensperger Scholarship Fund at the University of Pennsylvania or to Dickinson College.