

Distinguished Achievement Citation

Jay L. Ankeney

Class of 1943

With pride, we present Ohio Wesleyan's Distinguished Achievement Citation to Dr. Jay L. Ankeney in recognition of his exceptional career as a renowned heart surgeon and educator.

Jay Ankeney graduated from Ohio Wesleyan in 1943 and soon after received his M.D. at the Western Reserve University School of Medicine. After taking a break from his training to serve as a Lieutenant with the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1946 to 1948, he continued his medical training in Cleveland from 1948 to 1953. Dr. Ankeney finished his residencies in Manhattan and augmented the training with six months of study in Philadelphia, during which he studied under pioneering heart surgeon Dr. Jack Gibbons. In 1955, he returned home to Cleveland and joined the staff of Western Reserve University, now known as Case Western Reserve University, and the affiliated University Hospitals of Cleveland as a specialist in thoracic surgery.

In November of 1969, Dr. Ankeney became one of the earliest thoracic surgeons to dispense with the heart-lung machine in surgery when he performed the first successful off-pump open-heart procedure at University Hospitals. The practice allowed the surgeon to clear obstructed arteries and implant blood vessels while a patient's heart continued beating, a move that reduced operating and recovery time and involved less risk to the patient. Despite completing more than 150 successful off-pump surgeries, his technique was overlooked until the mid-1990s. He also developed the "Ankeney retractor", a surgical tool that conforms to the shape of the sternum during heart surgery. This tool was later manufactured by Johnson & Johnson and is widely used by surgeons today.

Dr. Ankeney is responsible for successfully developing the open heart and thoracic surgery residency programs at Case Western and University Hospitals and assumed the directorship of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery in 1972. After he retired in 1986, he was appointed by Case Western Reserve University as Professor Emeritus of Surgery. In honor of his service as a Professor at Case Western Reserve's Department of Thoracic Surgery, the department established the Jay L. Ankeney Endowed Professorship in Cardiothoracic Surgery in 1994.

Always involved in the support of higher education, Dr. Ankeney has also been active in numerous scientific and academic organizations. He served on the editorial boards of scientific journals, as well as on numerous medical advisory boards, including the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the American Board of Thoracic Surgery and the Academy of Medicine. In 2000, he was inducted into the Cleveland Medical Hall of Fame.

We join his reunioning classmates and his wife Julie in saluting Dr. Jay Ankeney and recognizing his outstanding accomplishments through the presentation of this Distinguished Achievement Award.

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