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John Wickwire Loop, 1924-1990.

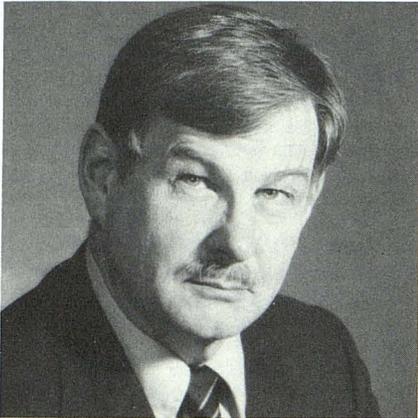
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John Wickwire Loop, 1924–1990



We lost one of our most intelligent, creative, and congenial colleagues with the passing of John Loop. Early in his career John became an accomplished neuroradiologist. Later he focused on issues in medical efficacy, and lastly he became expert in image transmission and management. He made important contributions to our specialty and to the University of Washington, where for 31 years he served its missions, trainees, and patients with grace and distinction.

John was born in Belvidere, IL, in 1924 and was educated at Depauw University, The University of Wyoming, and Harvard Medical School. He trained in radiology at the University of Chicago in the company of such luminaries as Paul Hodges, Russell Morgan, and Robert Moseley in the era when radiology was just beginning its leap into high technology.

With his characteristic keen perception of new trends and opportunities, John foresaw specialization in diagnostic radiology and was among the early Americans to opt for post-residency training in what was to become our first subspecialty, neuroradiology. At the time, Sweden was breaking all the barriers in interventional radiology, and John sought a fellowship at the University of Lund for what proved to be a most influential year, 1956–1957. There he mastered the principles of cerebral angiography and pneumoencephalography and found Maj Teorell, a medical student who later became a pediatrician, his first wife, and mother of his five children. He also became acquainted with the fledgling Department of Radiology at the University of Washington, where in 1959 he began his teaching and research career.

In the new department, John introduced

radiologist-performed angiography, air studies, and myelography at a time when neurosurgery conventionally dominated such procedures. With gas myelography, he showed thoracic myelopathy in neurofibromatosis, and with colleagues in neurosurgery he explored intraoperative intracranial angiography. A large regional population of persons with hydrocephalus allowed him to describe the development of diploic lamination after successful ventricular shunting.

His neuroradiologic orientation also led to his second interest in radiology, the evaluation of medical efficacy in diagnostic radiology. His paper in 1971 with Russell Bell, "The Utility and Futility of Radiologic Examination of the Skull for Injury," was a landmark notice of the overuse of medical resources and an early statement of a much larger problem that hitherto had received little organized attention. This interest dominated his efforts for a decade. With industrial engineering techniques, he studied technicians' and physicians' efficiency in radiography, and with the advent of CT, he evaluated the contribution of this technique to the management of cerebrovascular disease and trauma.

His expertise led to his recruitment, together with Lee Lusted, to direct the first organized effort by the American College of Radiology (ACR) to develop guidelines for the more efficacious use of specific radiologic examinations. The principles, now translated into "algorithms," persist despite constantly revised details as our technology evolves. This work led to his appointment to the Medical Radiation Advisory Committee of the United States Public Health Service, to his participation in several national conferences on quality assurance, and to his membership on several special study sections of the National Institutes of Health. Many of his contributions are to be found in publications of agencies, committees, and conferences.

The third decade of John's productive life was dominated by his interest in electronic imaging and communications. Early on, he recognized potential applications of computers in radiology and, subsequently, those possibilities in image transmission, archiving, and distribution. Together with Alan Rowberg (whom he lured from General Electric), the MITRE Corporation, and a team of engineers, he directed a large multiyear program for a digital imaging network and picture archiving system for the U. S. Army. Although this consuming undertaking reached its goals, John probably enjoyed even more the satellite image transmission system he developed

so that he could interpret in Seattle radiographs made in Sitka and Mt. Edgecumbe, AK, where he regularly consulted and fished for salmon.

Nationally, John served his colleagues in radiology through the ACR from 1971 to 1990 in a succession of committee and commission appointments on efficacy studies, quality assurance, electronic imaging, and ACR planning. In Seattle, he served as attending physician at several hospitals and as chief of radiology at Harborview Hospital from 1971 to 1987. In this capacity, he transformed the department from a clinical service unit to a productive academic component of the University of Washington School of Medicine. He served on the University's faculty from 1959, as Professor from 1976 to 1990 and as acting chairman of the Department of Radiology from 1978 to 1984. His interests in public health led to professorship in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, and his collegial temperament led to the chairmanship of the tenure committee of the University Senate. For his many local and national accomplishments, John was named Distinguished Citizen of the State of Washington in 1986.

John was much more than a professional person. He had charm and a certain charisma. He was a large man with a light heart, quick to respond and to find humor in the moment. He had a towering intelligence to match his figure, wit to entertain, and an engaging manner to delight his friends and admirers. He was noted for incisive commentary and was seldom without information, whatever the subject. Evenings with him were notably enhanced by the gourmet meals he planned and prepared. Yet, he had a private side: a privacy borne of accomplishment, self-confidence, and personal pride. John faced serious adversity more than once, each time surmounting it with his own resources and the strength that comes from loving and devoted children. Each challenge enhanced his nobility, including the last, his duel with colon cancer. In that duel, John was supported lovingly by his second wife, Joan.

John was a true academician, a devoted father, and a loyal friend. He had myriad admirers, both inside and outside medicine. Together with his family, they mourn the passing of a noble individual who enriched their lives and helped guide the evolution of diagnostic radiology.

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