

John J. McDonough, MD (1942-2019)

Jack McDonough died November 7th in Tenants Harbor, Maine at the age of 77. He was the consummate gentleman and professional; a humble man of impeccable integrity. He was my closest friend and confidant; he will be sorely missed.

Jack was a native Cincinnati. He attended Xavier University, received his medical degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, and did his general surgical residency at the then Cincinnati General Hospital. He proudly served in the U.S. Navy as the surgeon on the U.S.S. Constellation. Jack loved to reminisce about those days; be it an on-board medical crisis, a near disaster on the flight deck, or his car being accidentally spray painted navy gray by the ship's maintenance crew because it was parked where it should not have been when the Constellation was transporting it, gratis, to a new homeport.

I got to know Jack during our hand surgery fellowships in Louisville, KY. In short order, Jack became legendary for his technical prowess and here in Cincinnati was known as a surgeon's surgeon. His technical skills were unparalleled. He was always cool under fire whether deftly reattaching an amputated arm or repairing a ruptured aneurysm.

Jack was a voracious reader and became a Literary Club member in 1996. During his time as a Regular Member, he was more than a "Regular" with 14 papers and having served as Trustee and President (2013-14). He frequently brought guests and sponsored several new members. One of his proposals as President was to begin a systemized approach to on-boarding new members to include an identified mentor. The tumult in the Club at the time took priority over this on-boarding effort, but note that Joe Dehner is proposing a similar effort now. Jack's papers were entertaining and thoroughly researched - even his one piece of fiction included a detailed list of references. Many of his papers verified his deep interest in naval history, but all opened a view on an event that often was exciting in the telling. His one fictional paper came after long-term and well-loved member Robert Hilton, Jr, complimented him on a paper but added this comment: "I enjoyed your paper but you haven't written a literary paper until you have written fiction." Thus, came Jack's fictional paper starting in the mud of Viet Nam and proceeding to the dark side of the Cold War: "With Apologies to Somerset Maugham and John O'Hara."

Jack was a great citizen and our community was fortunate to have him. He served both U.C. and the Medical center in many capacities. He was a trustee of the UC Foundation for 15 years and received the Foundation's Trustee Award and served for 2 years as president of the College of Medicine's Alumni Association. Jack loved medical history. He was a 7-year chair of the advisory board of the Henry R. Winkler Center, which archives and exhibits the history of health sciences primarily in the Cincinnati area.

His passion for history went beyond medicine. He was a student of the Civil War and he took an annual road trip with friends to battlefields where he entertained his colleagues with detailed and fascinating trivia about Civil War battles.

No doubt stemming from his service in the Navy, Jack was a sailor at heart. For nearly 30 years, he went on an annual sailing trip with friends experiencing adventure and camaraderie. He faced a hurricane in the Bahamas and a Nor'easter off the coast of his beloved Maine. During these trips, he was designated as the ship's cook; reputed to be a magician in the ship's galley. He could create a 5-star cuisine, despite a pitching and rolling boat.

Jack's other aquatic passions were marine art and model shipbuilding. The walls in his Mt. Lookout home were adorned with paintings of sailing ships. His manual dexterity extended beyond hand surgery; he was a master model ship builder and both his Cincinnati and retirement home in Maine had a workshop dedicated to model shipbuilding. He gifted one of his models to the Literary Club where it stands in the window facing Fourth Street.

Finally, the best way to capture Jack's feelings about the club is this quote from his first paper, *Appointment with Murder*, which he repeated in his President's Address at the 164th Anniversary Dinner in 2013:

"Twenty-two years ago, I walked down the forward brow of the USS Constellation, an aircraft carrier, leaving a group of men I admired for their intelligence, dedication, and patriotism. I never thought that I would have the opportunity of being associated with another group of men who shared a similar set of values: education, literature, and good fellowship. I would like to thank you, the members of the Literary Club, for that opportunity."

Peter J. Stern

With contributions from: Tom Cuni, Igor Dumbazi, Mike Kremzar, Ted Silberstein