



Dick Gibbs Ellis, MD

1928-2020

By [Messenger Staff](#) | Published on July 17, 2020

Fort Worth – Dick Gibbs Ellis, MD, 92, of Fort Worth, died Sunday, July 12, 2020, in Fort Worth.

Funeral service is private. Future memorial service is pending.

Dick Gibbs Ellis, MD, was born in a Muskogee, Okla., hospital on April 24, 1928, to Dewey Gibbs and Bess Bobo Ellis as their third and last child. In March 1930, the family moved to Wellington where Mrs. Ellis had two sisters living. Dick attended public schools and graduated from WHS in 1945. He was class president and was a Boy Scout and a member of the Sons of the American Legion. He joined the Baptist Church while in high school. He then attended Baylor University in Waco for three years.

After completing the first year at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston (June 1949), he received a Bachelor of Science from Baylor-Waco. He received his MD in June 1952 and soon began his internship at St. Louis City Hospital No 1. He followed this with a year of general surgery residency and then married Katherine Louise Kolisek in August 1954.

He entered the U.S. Air Force in 1954 and spent most of the 24-month time in the London suburbs at the 3911th USAF Infirmary, which he served as commander. Their first child, Derek, was born in March 1956.

Following his discharge from the USAF in August 1956, he returned to St. Louis City Hospital completing his general surgery residency in June 1960. A second child, David, was born April 1957. Dr. Ellis was chief surgical resident at City Hospital for 18 months and at the Ellis Fischel State Cancer Hospital for six months.

His grandparents lived in Rhome and in the Avondale community of Tarrant County. From 1960-1963, he practiced general surgery with a group in Fort Worth for three years, during which time he became certified by the American Board of Surgery. A daughter, Anita, was born June 1962. In December 1963, the family moved to Columbus, Ohio, for 18 months, and Dr. Ellis was a fellow in pediatric surgery with Dr. H. William Clatworthy at Columbus Childrens Hospital. In July 1965, he returned to Fort Worth as Tarrant County's first fellowship trained pediatric surgeon and first pediatric sub-specialist.

He was a member of the following organizations: Tarrant County Medical Society, Texas Medical Association, Fort Worth Surgical Society, Texas Surgical Society, American College of Surgeons, Fort Worth Pediatric Society, Texas Pediatric Society, Texas Society of Pediatric Surgeons, American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP] (Surgery & Urology Sections), American College of Pediatricians, Lilliputian Surgical Society, British Association of Pediatric Surgeons and the American Pediatric Surgical Association (APSA). He is still the only Texan elected president of APSA, the principal organization for pediatric surgeons in the USA and Canada. He was an honorary member of the Polish and Turkish Pediatric Surgical Societies. He served as president of the Fort Worth Surgical Society, the Texas Society of Pediatric Surgeons, the Surgical Section of the AAP, APSA and the Lilliputian Surgical Society. He was elected to two non-consecutive terms as treasurer of APSA, the only APSA member to hold the same office twice.

In 1975, he was in the first group to be examined and to receive a certificate of special competence in pediatric surgery from the American Board of Surgery. He recertified this "board" several times, the last of which was after his retirement. He was an examiner for the ACGME (graduate education), which certified pediatric surgical training programs. He was clinical assistant professor of surgery at the University of Texas – Southwestern Health Science Center.

He was on the medical staff of many area hospitals in order to see consultations. He participated in the care of many infants and children at John Peter Smith Hospital, especially in the early years. He gave surgical presentations to many area medical staffs and societies. He initiated the grand rounds at Cook Childrens and made the first presentation. Nationally, he presented a scientific paper to every organization to which he belonged. He had over a dozen scientific publications in national surgical journals and was on the editorial board of the Journal of Pediatric Surgery for 10 years. He served three years on the development committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics. In 1996, the Tarrant County Medical Society awarded him the Gold Headed Cane, an award given annually to one physician.

Locally, he served as chairman of the March of Dimes, chairman of the American Cancer Society and he was on the founding board of the Ronald McDonald House. He was on the board at Casa Ma ana for 15 years and on the outdoor sporting committee and Wednesday wine committee at the Fort Worth Club for years. He made two medical mission

trips to Guatemala and was the grand maitre of the Confrerie St. Etienne, an Alsatian wine society, for six years. He held an advanced amateur radio rating with call letters WB5DMQ and was a Kilocycle Club member. He served as ship physician on the famous sailing vessel Seacloud 10 times and on other ships 10 additional times.

He and his wife visited all seven continents and more than 100 countries. He hunted in Canada and Mexico, as well as several states. He fished the Rio Negra in Brazil, the Lake Iliamna area in Alaska, for sailfish in Acapulco and for other fish in several places in Colorado, as well as Texas.

Dr. Ellis was very anxious to develop and promote Fort Worth as a medical center for infants and children. For 25 years, beginning with the first class, he lectured to the junior class students at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine.

When the present Cook Hospital opened in 1989, he arranged a symposium that brought 50 USA Pediatric Surgeons to Cook. Speakers included three internationally known Pediatric Surgeons from Harvard, UCLA and Dublin, Ireland. Over time, 20 internationally known pediatric surgeons were his guests at Cook. Dr. Ellis was president-elect and president of the medical-dental staff during the merger and served on both the "Ad Hoc Committee on Unification" and the new by-laws committee.

The merger process was described in "W.I. Cook Childrens Hospital-The Middle Years," a book authored by Dr. Ellis Cook Childrens on Lancaster Avenue.

He was predeceased by his parents; and both sisters; as well as by a son, Derek Ellis, DDS.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Kay Ellis; his son, David Ellis, MD of Dallas; his daughter, Anita E. Harton, JD, LLM, of Atlanta; seven grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

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