

# Dr. Herbert Yousem, obstetrician-gynecologist, 76

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**D**r. Herbert Leonard Yousem, a retired Baltimore obstetrician and gynecologist who was admired by colleagues and revered by his patients, died of bladder cancer Monday at his Owings Mills home. He was 76.

Born in Baltimore of immigrant parents from Poland, Dr. Yousem was raised on West Lafayette Avenue. He graduated in 1946 from City College and earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the Johns Hopkins University in 1950.

"His parents were uneducated sweatshop laborers who later opened a grocery store, and always placed a great emphasis on higher education," said a son, Dr. David M. Yousem of Lutherville, a staff neuroradiologist at **Johns Hopkins Hospital**.

Dr. Yousem was a 1954 graduate of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and completed a two-year residency in obstetrics and gynecology at **Sinai Hospital**. From 1957 to 1959, he served as a captain with the Army Medical Corps in France.

After completing a chief residency in his specialty at Sinai in 1960, he remained on its staff while establishing a practice in the Belvedere Towers building.

"He was responsible for delivering thousands of babies in the 1960s and 1970s before limiting his practice to gynecology. He was also a devoted academic, despite a focus on private practice," said his son. "His early years in training resulted in seminal work on the role of estrogen in the female menstrual cycle that led to a clinical appointment at Johns Hopkins Medical School."

"He was a really fine clinician and a particularly caring person who had a large OB/GYN following," said Dr. Murray M. Kappelman, a retired associate dean and professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at the UM medical school. "He loved doing medicine and always found it challenging. It was an integral part of his being."

"Although he had been my friend, a friendship I treasured, I'm standing here as the self-appointed spokesperson for a generation of OB/GYNs trained at Sinai between the mid-1960s and the late 1980s," Dr. Richard J. Bass, a Baltimore obstetrician and gynecologist, said in a eulogy for Dr. Yousem.

"He showed us how to be physicians through his words, his hands, and primarily by example. I was one of the many during that time who would single him out as having had the most positive influence on the way we took care of and, more important, cared for patients," he wrote.

"He was very compassionate and kind, and his caring for his patients went beyond the office. He'd call you at home to make sure everything was all right," said Eena R. Feld, a patient for 23 years. "He was a wonderful individual and very special. When he smiled at me, it was reassurance that I'd be OK."

In the 1970s, Dr. Yousem enrolled for two years at the University of Maryland School of Law, which enabled him to testify as a compensation specialist in legal matters related to OB/GYN cases.

After retiring in 1990, he developed an interest in sculpture, "continuing his study of the female form in limestone, alabaster and marble," his son said. Largely self-taught, he traveled to Petra Santa, Italy, to study with master marble sculptors. He also was an avid gardener.

Dr. Yousem was a member of Beth El Congregation in Pikesville and had served on its board in the 1980s.

Survivors also include his wife of 51 years, the former Stella Platnik, a former social worker with Jewish Family Services; another son, Dr. Samuel Yousem, chief of anatomic pathology at Presbyterian University in Pittsburgh; a brother, Jonas Yousem of Pikesville; a sister, Anna Yousem Schwartz of Pikesville; and five grandchildren.

Services were yesterday.

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