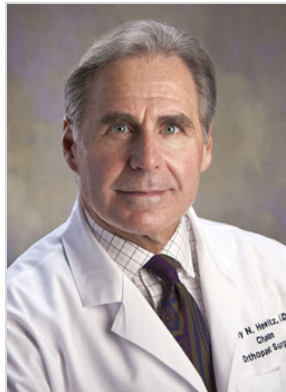


Beaumont mourns the passing of Harry Herkowitz, M.D., chair of Orthopaedic Surgery

Internationally renowned surgeon specialized in spine disorders

Harry Herkowitz, M.D., chairman of Orthopaedic Surgery at Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, passed away on Friday, June 7, following a heart attack.



An icon in the world of orthopaedic surgery, Dr. Herkowitz, 65, was also professor and chairman of Orthopaedic Surgery at Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine and physician leader of Beaumont Health System's Orthopaedics Center of Excellence.

A West Bloomfield resident, he is survived by his wife Jan, son Seth (Laura) and daughter Rachael (Michael – fiancé).

Dr. Herkowitz came to Beaumont in 1975 for his orthopaedic residency, followed by a fellowship in spine surgery which established his specialty and the focus of his career for the next three decades. He became chairman of the department of Orthopaedic Surgery in 1991 and directed the spine surgery fellowship program from 1987 to 2008.

He specialized in the surgical management of spinal disorders including spinal stenosis, herniated discs, deformity and trauma to the neck and back. His research interests included degenerative solutions to aging discs and improving spinal implants.

"His legacy will be in his academic and teaching role," says Jeffrey

Fischgrund, M.D., Beaumont orthopaedic surgeon. "He started the first training program for spine surgeons, and two generations of spine surgeons are carrying forward his legacy. If you made a tree of spine surgery, all the branches lead to Harry Herkowitz."

In 1991, Dr. Herkowitz published a landmark study for treatment of degenerative spondylolisthesis, a spinal condition in which one vertebra slips forward over the vertebra below. The study influenced much of the research to the present day and established Beaumont as an important institution regarding development of definitive treatments for that condition.

Dr. Herkowitz published dozens of articles in peer-reviewed journals and presented at hundreds of conferences. He also edited a dozen major textbooks on the spine, and served as editor or on the editorial board of major orthopedic and spine journals.

He was a graduate of Wayne State University School of Medicine and completed a spine surgery fellowship at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia.

Under his direction, the Orthopaedic Surgery department at Beaumont, Royal Oak has been ranked 13 times among the top 50 programs in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, and was Michigan's top-ranked program for orthopaedic care in 2012-13.

"He had the great goal of ensuring the highest-quality patient care while being committed to the education of residents and encouraging research," says Jerome Wiater, M.D., vice chief, Orthopaedic Surgery, Beaumont, Royal Oak. "He was everyone's mentor and a friend to residents through his career. He also loved being a father and was proud of his family, and he extended that warmth to all of his colleagues. He encouraged all of us to be the best we can."

Dr. Herkowitz was honored with an Outstanding Academic Excellence Award by Beaumont in 2011. He was also named among the 100 Best Spine Surgeons in America and recognized by Best Doctors in America.

Dr. Herkowitz was a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery; a member of the Cervical Spine Research Society, International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine, North American Spine Society, Michigan Orthopaedic Society, Mid-American Orthopaedic Association, American Orthopaedic Association, the Spine Study Group and the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. He is also a former president of the Cervical Spine Research Society, the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine and the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Flags at Beaumont's hospitals have been lowered to half-staff in his honor.