



Jimmy Frank Howell M.D.

September 10, 1932 - December 22, 2014

Jimmy Frank Howell, M.D., 82, of Houston, Texas passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family on Monday, December 22, 2014. Dr. Howell was born September 10, 1932 in Winnfield, Louisiana to Burley DeSoto Howell and Maggie Penola Howell. He was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Billie June Howell Murphy, and is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Roberta Blankenstein Howell; children, Elizabeth Annette Howell LeNoble and husband Christian LeNoble, Roberta Elise Howell Houren and husband Jay Houren, Celia Deanne Howell Dettling and husband David Dettling, Jennifer Katherine Howell Caspary and husband Todd Caspary, James Frank Howell and wife Stephanie Sarao Howell, Robert Collins Howell; grandchildren, James Joseph LeNoble and wife Melanie Parinas LeNoble, Anne Estelle LeNoble, Elise Marie Houren, Catherine Adelaide Houren, Carolyn Louise Houren, Jonathan Bentley Dettling, Ross Anthony Dettling, Melissa Elizabeth Caspary, Sarah Caroline Caspary, Samuel Selim Caspary, Reid Gerard Caspary, Robert Collins Howell, II, Brennan Elizabeth Howell; great grandchildren, Emile Christian LeNoble, Keira Sage LeNoble, Eden Paige LeNoble, as well as numerous nieces, nephews, extended family and dear friends.

Dr. Howell was a Professor of Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine and served in this position for 50 years. He graduated from Baylor College in 1957 and was awarded a position in Baylor Affiliated Surgical Residency Program

after completing a Residency in 1958. He completed the General Surgery Residency Program in 1962. He then completed his Thoracic Surgery Residency in 1963, having been trained by Doctors DeBakey, Cooley, Crawford, Morris and others. Upon completion of his Thoracic Cardiovascular Training, he was invited to join Dr. Michael E. DeBakey as his associate in the Department of Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine. The development of cardiovascular surgery was very rapid in the early era, and new “firsts” seemed the norm rather than the exception. He served as Director of The Vascular Surgery Training Program at Baylor College of Medicine and The Methodist Hospital, which has produced numerous national and international vascular surgeons. He was a member of multiple professional societies, including The American College of Surgeons, American Medical Society, The Society of Thoracic Surgery, International Cardiovascular Society, Association for Vascular Surgery, Texas Surgical Society, Houston Surgical Society, The American College of Chest Surgeons, American College of Cardiology, the Osler Society and was elected to the Alpha Omega Alpha Society.

He was instrumental in the development of certain types of cardiac surgery, especially for ischemic heart disease. Inspired by Dr. H. Edward Garrett early in his career, he sought a surgical solution to coronary occlusive disease. This work resulted in the first successful coronary artery bypass operation in 1964 by Drs. Garrett and Howell. Dr. Howell performed more than 60,000 surgical procedures with more than 30,000 being cardiac or vascular in nature. He has been recognized worldwide for his many contributions to the reduction of disability and death from heart disease and stroke.

In as much as service to the medical field and his patients were important in his life, cattle ranching and oil and gas were his loves away from the hospital. Jimmy could analyze an oil well or operate a bulldozer as well as anyone and spent much of his free time at his ranch in Liberty, Texas. When he was not at the hospital, he was at the ranch with his beloved wife Roberta. Above all, he

loved his family and loved spending time with them. He was loved by those who knew him and will be greatly missed.

The Howell family is deeply grateful for the loving care given to Dr. Howell by the doctors and nurses at the Methodist Hospital, especially Dr. Albert E. Raizner, Dr. Juan J. Olivero, Sr., and Dr. Gerald M. Lawrie.

The Howell family will be present to receive friends for a visitation and reception, Monday, December 29, 2014 from 5:00 PM until 7:00 PM in St. Basil Hall at St. Anne Catholic Church, 2120 Westheimer Road, Houston, TX 77098. The Funeral Mass will commence Tuesday, December 30, 2014 at 10:00 AM at St. Anne Catholic Church. Dr. Howell will be laid to rest at Glenwood Cemetery in a private family ceremony following the service. Friends and family are invited to attend a reception at River Oaks Country Club, 1600 River Oaks Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77019 beginning at 1:00 PM following graveside services.

In lieu of flowers please consider contributions in Dr. Howell's memory to Baylor College of Medicine, Jimmy and Roberta Howell Chair in Cardiovascular Surgery, MSC #800, Post Office Box 4976 Houston, Texas 77210. Visit www.DettlingFuneral.com to leave online tributes.

Cemetery Details

Glenwood Cemetery

2525 Washington Avenue
Houston, TX 77007

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **29**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

St. Anne Catholic Church
2120 Westheimer Road
Houston, TX 77019

Funeral Mass

DEC **30**. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Anne Catholic Church
2120 Westheimer Road
Houston, TX 77019

Reception

DEC **30**. 1:00 PM (CT)

River Oaks Country Club
1600 River Oaks Boulevard
Houston, TX 77019

Tribute Wall



“ Jimmy Frank Howell M.D.

October 08, 2023 at 10:52 AM



“ Jimmy Frank Howell M.D.

October 06, 2023 at 01:12 AM



“ Jimmy Frank Howell M.D.

October 05, 2023 at 09:45 AM



“ Jimmy Frank Howell M.D.

October 05, 2023 at 01:54 AM



“ Today is April 18th, 2017 and I am just now seeing that Dr. Howell died almost 3 years ago. I was blessed to have a quadruple by-pass by him 14 years ago. I was told at that time that he was a legend in his field of heart surgeries. I'm still alive and well and can live a normal life. I know he has been missed since his passing.

Clara Velasco - April 18, 2017 at 03:40 PM

“*Methodist Hospital, 7:30 AM, February 21, 1994, a day of which I have little recollection but at the same time, a day I will never forget. The day before, accompanied by my wife Grace, I arrived from a long flight to Houston from Saudi Arabia. On arrival I commenced a complete diagnostic workup including an angiogram by cardiologist, Dr. Mohammad Attar. Dr. Attar and I discussed my condition and need for an immediate heart by-pass. Dr. Attar had made some preliminary arrangements and informed me that a top-rated surgeon had already agreed to perform the operation if I agreed to it. Based on this discussion and the availability of the surgeon, whom I had never met, I asked for the operation to take place the following morning. That surgeon turned out to be Dr. Jimmy Frank Howell, MD.*

At the time I knew nothing of Dr. Howell's illustrious past and his accomplishments. In fact, I hadn't even seen him before his visit to me during the time just after I was released to the hospital room from intensive care. As Dr. Howell and his entourage entered the room I had chosen to share with two other men, the man in the next bed to mine looked up and greeted Dr. Howell with, "Why, hello Dr. Howell, my name is Morgan (I believe it was Morgan, not sure). You performed a heart by-pass on me over twenty years ago." They chatted a bit then Dr. Howell came to see me. We discussed how I felt and a bit about the operation and the findings then Dr. Howell left the room to continue his rounds. Mr. Morgan explained that he was in the hospital for a condition other than cardiovascular problems and I was quite relieved to know of the success of his heart by-pass operation.

I recovered in a relatively short time, aided by a cardiovascular rehabilitation exercise program and, as I left the hospital, I again met with Dr. Howell. That was the last time I met with the man that had saved my life. Since that meeting I have lived a very normal life and have so far enjoyed wonderful health. I have never suffered the devastation of a heart attack and I am sure the heart by-pass operation precluded the event. My father's father died of a massive heart attack in the presence of my father when my father was twelve-years-old. My father's brother died at age 45 of a massive

heart attack. He passed on while working on a car with his son, my cousin, in his presence. My father died of a heart attack at his home in the presence of his wife, my step-mother. My fifty-two-year-old brother died at home alone of a massive heart attack. Dr. Howell, with the attention of Dr. McWilliams, MD of Saudi Aramco's medical staff and Dr. Mohammad Attar of the Baylor team, all worked together to save my life.

*I have lived to now in near-perfect health and have lived to see each of my children graduate from college; my wife publish her memoir, *Graciela, No One's Child*; our son deliver the Student Commencement Speech at the commencement ceremony as he graduated *summa cum laude* from Harvard Graduate School in 2013; our two grandchildren progress through school at the tops of their classes, all because Dr. Howell and that wonderful team of cardiologists were able to do what it took to save my life.*

I have thought long and hard about what it took to be able to perform that by-pass surgery. There were certainly uncountable, strained moments when Dr. Howell had been inconveniently called away from his family, long hours of study, years of very inadequate sleep and hours of working on, the exhaustion point having been passed days before. His hours of formative work resulted in the first successful coronary artery bypass operation in 1964 in company with inspirational partner, Dr. H. Edward Garrett. Dr. Howell has since performed many tens of thousands of surgical procedures with more than half being cardiac or vascular procedures.

Thank you Dr. Howell and thank you to all of those around you who made the sacrifices. May the true God in heaven bless your memory always.

Robert Leon Banta - May 23, 2016 at 06:55 PM

BM

“ I just learned today that Dr. Howell passed away. Dr. Howell took wonderful care of my parents, Jiggs and Dinnie Harmon and one of my cousins, Skotty Hopkins. My parents lived in Port Arthur, TX and my cousin lives in Nederland, TX, but they all came to Houston so Dr. Howell could perform their surgeries. The world has lost a wonderful man and the medical community has lost an exceptional doctor. Belinda Harmon Murray

Belinda Murray - April 23, 2015 at 09:40 PM

DB

“ I met Dr. Howell September 02, 1997 when I was told by Dr. Solomon I needed bypass surgery immediately. I was only 45 and it rocked my world. Dr. Howell met me in pre-op to say he was going to help me after he finished his scheduled surgeries. We talked for 15 minutes about the dangers and worries and I realized he wasn't worried at all. I was relaxed at that point. I was in surgery several hours as Dr. Howell did a triple bypass. I was in ICU, then to a room and home. Now 17 years and 6 months later I am still here and the main bypass is still going strong! After I was back on my feet I found I was inspired by Dr. Howell. I became a volunteer in Fondren 3 waiting room every Friday. I remember when Dr. Howell passed the 50K surgery point. I am a better person for knowing Dr. Howell, GOD BLESS HIM!

Douglas Burson

Douglas Burson - March 14, 2015 at 11:25 AM

LB

“ I was DR Howell's patient for 30 yrs. He was so good to me and my family as well. He stayed with me through the years and referred me to other good DRs throughout the years as specialist were needed; however I still saw him yearly. He was the best DR in the whole world and I do not say that lightly. I don't know what I will do without him and knowing he is there whenever I need a DR. I am so sorry for your loss and the loss to all of us, his patients. Go with God, DR Howell. I will never forget you. Lois Blake

Lois Blake - February 19, 2015 at 11:59 AM

WF

“ Condolences to the Howell family. Our thoughts and prayers go out to your whole family. Psalms 147:3 says Jehovah God, "heals the broken hearted, and binds up their wounds." May God bring you comfort and peace.

Williams Family - January 06, 2015 at 04:12 PM

KW

“ *Dear Mrs. Howell and Family,
I was saddened to hear of the death of Dr. Howell. Please accept my deepest condolences and sympathy. I had the privilege and pleasure of working with him in Fondren-Brown operating room when I was an RN there with Dr. Crawford. I understand they were great friends and two of the greatest surgeons ever. Further, they were very kind and taught me a great deal regarding cardiovascular, peripheral vascular and thoracic surgery. We shared a lot of laughter and smiles together. He loved his family and the ranch in Liberty, also, and spoke frequently regarding that. Heaven has received another angel and again, I am very sorry for your loss.*

*Kind regards, love, and prayers,
Kathleen Laman Van Wagenen, MSN, CRNA*

Kathleen Van Wagenen - January 04, 2015 at 12:12 PM

WM

“ I has the distinct honor to operate with Dr Jimmy Howell and Dr Michael DeBakey in 1965. That was the 1st time I had met Jimmy and he did most of the operation that day. We have been good friends for 49 years and have shared many patients with Jimmy with him doing all of his great work on my patients. He was a gifted Cardio-Vascular surgeon who also had the gift of treating all patients as his best friends, regardless of their socio-economic status. We often talked weekly on the phone, and many times I would ask Jimmy his advice on what Doctor would be best for something in another field. He would always give my patients the best Doctors to go to at Methodist Hospital. One of his last operations was on a lady that I had sent to Jimmy; she had Ca of the Lung and Jimmy has her cured. I already miss him and he can't be replaced. Jimmy has a wonderful family, and his wife Roberta is a saint to raise 6 children while Jimmy was doing surgery and at Methodist Hospital most of all day and late into the night. See you later Jimmy

Wayne G Mulloy MD

Wayne G Mulloy MD - December 31, 2014 at 09:11 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Jimmy Frank Howell M.D..



December 30, 2014 at 08:58 AM

KS

“ *Dr. Howell took care of and facilitated care of many of my family members, so many times, even out of his specialties. When called on, his doctoring included caring for the emotional needs of those involved with life threatening situations, whether or not he intended that to be the case. Never was there a more considerate and compassionate physician - or such a sweet man.*

Karen White Stanfield

Karen Stanfield - December 29, 2014 at 01:32 PM

LH

“ *Howell family, I am deeply saddened by your great loss. Dr jimmy Howell saved my dad and father in law with his healing hands. My family will always hold a very special place for the greatest surgeon, Dr Jimmy Howell. So sorry for your loss and may you find comfort in knowing that he was loved by many patients and their families. Rest in peace, sweet man.*

Lanell Janak Higginbotham - December 29, 2014 at 11:43 AM

SG

“ As I look across Dr. Howell's hay field, I am overwhelmed with emotions. Every morning I admire the Live Oak trees he planted along the fence row across from where I live and the Pine trees that line the driveway going to his ranch house. I am blessed to have had him as my neighbor and friend, here in Liberty, where he took care of the people of this community. When there was a medical need, all we had to do was call him or one of the fabulous ladies in his office. Within a minute we had an appointment sometimes the same day, but no later than the next day.

He saved my husband's life performing a very difficult surgery that nobody else would have attempted. Anyone other than Dr. Howell, would have sent him home to die. Dr. Howell said, "I've done this surgery a few times (about 1/2 dozen) but I can do it, and do it successfully." And he did! Then, he would stop by and check on him when he was here on the weekends. He made house calls for many of his patients out here, which is unheard of today. What a remarkable man.

Thank you, Dr. Howell, for being our friend . We will miss you.

Sue Gothard - December 29, 2014 at 10:15 AM

PM

“ I wrote the post below about Dr. Jimmy Howell back in 2010 after he saved my life for a second time. Today with a huge lump in my throat and a heavy heart, I learned that he passed away on Monday, December 22, 2014. His obituary can be found [here](#); Dr. Jimmy Howell.

I cannot express enough what a special man he was. His laugh and sense of humor helped me through two very tough times in my life. My best memory of him was when I wrote with a sharpie on my hip prior to the 2nd surgery with the words, "Dr. Howell, please make my scars match!" Since I would now have two thoracic scars, one on each side, I wanted them to look good! :) He cracked up and told me during the surgery he just bent over laughing when he saw it!

Dr. Howell, may you rest in peace and know that while here on this earth that your work saved thousands and thousands of lives. You made a difference! Your legacy will live on forever. Thank you for dedicating your life to saving others.

DR. JIMMY HOWELL ~ A HOUSTON LEGEND!

This is the man who saved my life seven years ago. When he walked into the room the first time that I met him, he simply said, "Darlin, I'm gonna have to operate ya!" It was at that moment that I knew this was a very special man. With cowboy boots peeking out from under his scrubs, his down to earth personality resonated within me. I knew that I was in good hands.

Dr. Jimmy Howell

As things go in life, I once again turn to this legend of a doctor to take care of me. Seeing him this week made me realize how blessed I am to have a doctor of his caliber right here in Houston,

Texas. Let me share with you some incredible things about Dr. Jimmy Howell!

Dr. Howell has been on the Baylor College of Medicine faculty since 1964. I was 4 years old then!

He is currently a Professor of Surgery in the Cardiothoracic Surgery Division of the Michael E. DeBakey Department.

Dr. Howell has performed surgery alongside Denton Cooley and Michael DeBakey who are considered to be legends in the field.

In 1992 Dr. Howell was chosen by his peers as one of the top surgeons in America.

Dr. Howell is currently considered to be one of the top thoracic surgeons in the world. People from all over come to see him.

Visiting his office is like a walk through LIFE Magazine. There are many pictures of Dr. Cooley and Dr. DeBakey who have made history in the field of cardiac surgery. Dr. Howell's nurse Lou, took me down the hall and gave me some insight to the many photos and memorabilia.

I am honored to know this man and that once again my life will be in his hands. I wanted to write about Dr. Howell as I am sure that there are many of you out there who may not have ever heard of him before. I hope that you too have a Dr. Howell in your life. These men and women dedicate their lives to take care of us and I will always be forever grateful to my favorite doctor in the whole world. Thanks Dr. Howell, I love you!



Paula McDonald - December 29, 2014 at 10:02 AM

GR

“ When I moved to Houston in 1970 to learn to work in cardiac surgery, I was lucky enough to be assigned to work with Jimmy Frank Howell. He not only taught me the intricacies of cardiac surgery, he taught me Southern phrases and expressions I had never heard in New York. Over the next decade, we worked together as part of a great team. We frequently spent more time at work than at home, but it was a privilege to be a member of his remarkable team. I got to know Dr. Howell as a surgeon, a husband and a father. His family was always so important to him. As a team, we sometimes partied and had fun together.
Even after I left his team, Dr. Howell and I remained colleagues and friends.
I am very fortunate to have known such a wonderful surgeon and man.



Ginny Baird, RN

Ginny Baird, RN - December 28, 2014 at 05:08 PM

“ Dear Howell Family:

I want to thank you for the privilege of taking care of your parents. I feel humble and appreciative for the honor you have extended to me in having me participate in the services for Dr. Howell.

I first met him in 1970 when my wife and I arrived in Houston to complete my post-graduate training in Internal Medicine and Nephrology at Baylor. Shortly after, we learned of Dr. Jimmy Howell – one of the best surgeons in the Medical Center. In those days I received multiple calls from Guatemalan patients in need of surgical care, and they all went to Dr. Howell, who always did a terrific job not only in the successful outcomes but also along the way with his personal care and unparalleled human touch.

Everyone wanted to see Dr. Howell even if the problem was urologic or neurosurgical, and his impeccable reputation extended far and wide. We used to tease him that he was a “hand surgeon”, since he would put get his hands on any case in sight and see a case of complicated heart problem followed by a removal of a gall bladder, thyroid, colon and to finish off the day, an abdominal aortic aneurysm...

I had an immense amount of respect for him, and always felt I needed to call him “Dr. Howell.” However, after about 20 years of working side by side, I finally broached the question – can I call you Jimmy? He answered, “The last time I checked, that’s my name!” Typical...

Jimmy meant a lot to different people and he leaves us a major legacy, a beautiful family, and thousands of patients whose lives he saved. In a way he touched the future by saving thousands of lives, allowing patients to see their children grow and develop. Despite this impact, his humble demeanor was example to all who knew him.

For years I tried to convince him to share his life experiences with a freelance writer, mainly to leave for his friends and family. I think because of his humility, he never pursued it...

He will be forever missed, but I am sure his parents in heaven greeted him with open arms with the proud words, "well done, son!"

Sincerely,

Juan J. Olivero

Juan J. Olivero - December 28, 2014 at 02:19 PM

JW

*“ I am just hearing this news and I am deeply saddened by the loss of Dr.Howell. I too worked with him in Fondren for many years...we have lost yet another giant in Cardiovascular Surgery. Such a kind, dedicated, soft spoken, so very accomplished surgeon and gentleman. I feel so very fortunate to have been enriched my own career and knowledge in the care of cardiovascular patients from this giant of a man. My thoughts and prayers for strength and support go to his loving family. We all share in your profound loss....
Judy Wright, RN*

Judy Wright - December 25, 2014 at 11:21 PM

JM

“ Dr. Howell we will miss you, our prayers go out to you and your family. It was an honor to have known you, even more so to have worked with you. A true gentleman, an eminence in cardiovascular surgery.

Juan Jorge Olivero (Jr) MD - December 25, 2014 at 09:11 PM

NR

“ I was very honored to work with Dr. Howell for 30 years at Methodist...as a nurse in Fondren ICU, and later, as Dr.W. Gaston's nurse. He was a kind, dedicated man, and a giant in cardiovascular surgery. He will be well-remembered, and greatly missed.

Nancy Robertson, RN - December 25, 2014 at 02:54 PM

NR

“ I was very honored to work with Dr. Howell for 30 years at Methodist...as a nurse in Fondren ICU, and later, as Dr.W. Gaston's nurse. He was a kind, dedicated man, and a giant in cardiovascular surgery. He will be well-remembered, and greatly missed.

Nancy Robertson, RN - December 25, 2014 at 02:54 PM

HJ

I had the privilege of knowing Dr. Howell both as a friend and as a patient on several occasions. My first experience was in 1985 when I was diagnosed with colon cancer. A family friend had done his general surgery residency under Dr. Howell who was his recommendation for the best surgeon to perform my operation. Dr. Howell did the surgery as a favor to his friend. The night before the surgery, I was told to expect a visit from Dr. Howell. It was 10 pm before his entourage came in. I told him, he needed to get some rest because he had "my" surgery the next day. I was moved down for prep around 5 pm and into surgery somewhat later (I was scheduled after the days cardiovascular patients). Surgery was completed at 10 pm and was a complete success. Sixteen years later, I had pancreatic tumor which had to be removed. It was thought to be benign, but as a precaution, Dr. Howell was prepared to do a Whipple Procedure if necessary. It turned out to be benign and I continued with dialysis because of kidney failure. Dr. Howell then performed surgery to allow peritoneal dialysis. (later surgically reversed). Two years later, I received a transplant and while in Dunn Tower, my wife saw Dr. Howell's entourage go down the hall to the Nurse's Station. She caught up with him and he, of course, came and visited and wished me well. He was a great man and it was my good fortune that he interrupted his busy cardiovascular schedule to do four general surgeries for me.

Harold "Jake" Jacobson

Harold G. Jacobson - December 26, 2014 at 10:32 AM

JN

*Dear Howell Family,
I am so sorry for your loss. Over the years, Dr. Howell operated on both of my parents and even removed my thyroid. I will always remember him with fondness for the wonderful care and support he gave to each of us and to all of his patients.*

*Jayne Nathan
Kansas City MO*

Jane C. Nathan - December 28, 2014 at 09:00 PM