

Peter Mauch remembered as skilled physician-scientist and beloved leader

The patient, already a long-term survivor of Hodgkin lymphoma, just learned she now had a second cancer. She was understandably upset, but because the doctor confirming the diagnosis was Peter Mauch, MD – who had previously supported her through two pregnancies and many other health challenges – she felt able to keep her composure.

“He touched my arm, looked me in the eye, and said, ‘I am not concerned about this. It’s going to be fine,’” the patient recalled recently. “It allayed my fears.”

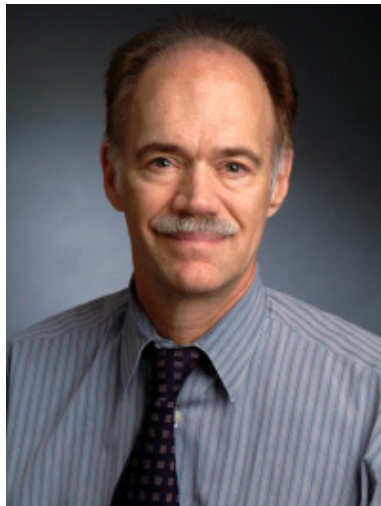
Mauch, who died on Sept. 8 at age 70 after a long illness, displayed this quiet, calming confidence in each of the roles he held during more than 40 years at Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women’s Cancer Center (DF/BWCC). Respected worldwide for his lymphoma expertise, he was a dedicated clinician, researcher, mentor, and colleague. As word of his passing spread, co-workers and patients reflected on how he had touched their lives.

“When I was a medical student and was assigned to research Hodgkin disease, it seemed that every single paper was written by this man Peter Mauch,” says Andrea Ng, MD, of Radiation Oncology. “Little did I know he would become a pivotal person in my life, helping shape my career path, and serving as a source of support each step of the way.”

Mauch was a man of vision. Early in his career, he created a database that included all Hodgkin lymphoma patients treated in the Longwood Medical Area since the late 1960s. It has since grown into one of the largest, most well-maintained Hodgkin lymphoma databases in the country, helping to identify prognostic factors, shape treatment approaches, and bring to light serious late complications of cancer treatment.

The long-term survivors in this database now serve as a unique and valuable source of participants for prospective clinical trials – evaluating screening and prevention strategies for late effects of treatment. Findings from these studies are vitally important in generating evidence-based follow-up guidelines for cancer survivors who have received radiation therapy.

At DF/BWCC, Mauch saw hundreds of new lymphoma



Peter Mauch, MD

patients each year from all over the world, and had a follow-up clinic packed with survivors – including many treated decades ago who flew across the country to see him. He ran a full-time research laboratory for more than 20 years, and his scientific contributions included findings on the mechanism of stem cell mobilization, effects of cytotoxic agent and radiation on marrow reserve, and the potentiating effects of growth factors on the damages, all directly applicable to clinical practice in patients undergoing hematopoietic stem cell transplantation.

Within Radiation Oncology, Mauch served for many years as chair of the Quality Improvement Committee, New Treatment/

Technologies Committee, and Departmental Committee on Faculty Promotions. He counseled countless junior- and intermediate-level faculty members on career paths and strategies for academic promotion, and trained and mentored students, residents, young faculty members, and research scientists. In addition to leadership roles in the American Society of Radiation Oncology, American Board of Radiology, and other groups, he authored many papers in research journals and was lead editor of two definitive textbooks, *Hodgkin Lymphoma* and *Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma*.

“Dr. Mauch has been a guardian angel for his patients, students, residents, colleagues, department, and institution,” says Daphne Haas-Kogan, MD, chair of Radiation Oncology at Dana-Farber. “With moral fortitude, kindness, integrity, and bravery he brought the best out in others, inspiring and challenging us to be better physicians, colleagues, and human beings.”

At home, Mauch also embraced his role as a father. He is survived by his daughter, Natalia, and son, Julián, as well as his wife, Barbara, and his brothers, Jonathan and David. Mauch will be remembered on Dec. 4 at a memorial hosted by DF/BWCC (details to come).

“Peter was a kind soul, and treated everyone with kindness,” says Bonnie Baines, a Radiation Oncology colleague of Mauch’s for more than 25 years. “He loved his work and made a difference in so many peoples’ lives with his expertise. I feel like a family member has left us.”

– Saul Wisnia