



John "Jack" Sciarra M.D., Ph.D

March 4, 1932 - July 6, 2025

John "Jack" Joseph Sciarra, M.D., Ph.D., died peacefully at the age of 93 after a brief illness on July 6th in Wilmette, Illinois.

Jack was born in West Haven, Connecticut on March 4, 1932, the only child of Mary Grace Sanzone and John Sciarra. He attended Yale College, graduating with a B.S. degree in 1953, magna cum laude. In 1957, he received his M.D. from the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. While a student at Columbia, he spent a semester at Guy's Hospital in London, a very formative experience that led to a lifelong love of travel and international service. He completed his internship at Yale and his residency at Columbia in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology under the direction of Dr. Howard C. Taylor, Jr., who became his lifelong mentor. During his residency, which he completed in 1965, he received a two-year fellowship that allowed him to earn a Ph.D. in Anatomy in 1963.

Having completed his medical education, he remained on the faculty of Columbia University as an Assistant Professor but aspired to run his own department. In 1968, he was appointed Professor and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Minnesota (U of M) Medical School where, at age 36, he was the youngest chairman of a major department in the medical school. In 1975, he moved to Northwestern University Medical School to become the Thomas J. Watkins Professor and

Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology for both the Medical School and Northwestern Memorial Hospital. He remained in the position for 28 years, stepping down as Chairman in 2003 and remaining on the faculty until 2008. Northwestern recognized his contributions by the establishment of the John J. Sciarra Endowed Professorship to be held by future Chairs of the Department.

During his time at Columbia, U of M and Northwestern, Jack continued to provide exceptional clinical care while also doing cutting-edge medical research and scholarship in his field. His passion for medical research was matched only by his enthusiastic participation in medical meetings and conferences where he shared his work. He published over 250 papers in peer-reviewed journals and was the author or editor of 18 books. His crowning editorial achievement was serving as Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics from 1985 to 2006.

He also was devoted to serving his profession on an international scale and traveled frequently into his late 80s – his passport was among his most treasured possessions. He was President of several national organizations in the United States and served as the President of FIGO (the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics) from 1991 to 1994, representing societies of physicians in over 100 countries. His contributions were recognized internationally with numerous honors and awards including a fellowship in the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynecology of London, and honorary fellowships in Italy, Israel, India, China and the Philippines. Even in retirement, he continued working, serving for six years as Vice President of the International Academy of Human Reproduction, based in Italy and Switzerland.

His entire career was characterized by his ability to mentor younger doctors and attract colleagues to his Department who would go on to future leadership

roles in their careers. Eight of his recruits became Chairs of major OB/GYN departments, including two, Dr. Sharon Dolley and Dr. Sherman Elias, who succeeded him as Chairs at Northwestern. Many of his former residents, fellows and faculty members moved on to leadership positions in leading medical schools and, in some cases, became officers in major national and international medical organizations. He had a unique gift for staying in touch with many of these younger doctors and mastered the use of email long before most of his peer group. This facility with email allowed him to stay in touch with many of his colleagues long after his traveling days were over.

Even with all of his career commitments, he was a wonderful husband and father. He married Barbara Crafts Patton in 1960 after meeting her at Columbia where she had completed her degree in Nursing. With her, he raised three children and had a life full of family gatherings and travel. This included spending time at their second home in Orleans (Cape Cod), Massachusetts and at a residence in London. His love of the places where he lived and visited most often -- Chicago, New York City, Cape Cod, London and Italy -- is a passion shared by his entire family. He is survived by his wife Barbara; his three children, Vanessa, John and Leonard Sciarra; his nine grandchildren – Daigneau, Grace and John Ray; Quinn, Luca and Piper Sciarra; Nicolas, Tomas and Valentina Sciarra; his son-in-law Scott Ray and his daughters-in-law Gerri Sciarra and Cintia Cuperman. He will be much missed by all of them as well as the extended Sciarra and Sanzone families, many of whom he remained close to throughout his life. Ave atque vale.

A funeral mass will be held at 11:00 am on Saturday August 16th at Our Lady of Mt Carmel Catholic Church in Hamden, Connecticut. Interment will follow at Saint Lawrence Cemetery in West Haven, Connecticut. Visitation will be Saturday from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. at Sisk Brothers Funeral Home 3105 Whitney Avenue, Hamden. In lieu of flowers , please donate to Community Health &

Wellness Center, 469 Migeon Avenue, Torrington, CT 06790 Attn: Kelly Baxter
Spitz, Director of Development. www.chwctorr.org

Cemetery Details

St Lawrence Cemetery

280 Derby Avenue
West Haven, CT 06516
<http://ccacem.org>

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 16. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

Sisk Brothers Funeral Home
3105 Whitney Ave
PO Box 185066
Hamden, CT 06518

Funeral Mass

AUG 16. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Our Lady of Mt Carmel
2819 Whitney Ave
Hamden, CT 06518-2544
(203) 248-0141

Burial

AUG **16**. 12:15 PM - 12:45 PM (Est)

St Lawrence Cemetery
280 Derby Avenue
West Haven, CT 06516
<http://ccacem.org>