

# Henry Cecil, CHOP

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Henry Shuford Cecil, former director of child development at CHOP and medical director of Children's Seashore House, died December 7 of Parkinson's disease at the Hill at Whitemarsh in Lafayette Hill. He was 97.

Dr. Cecil was born in Spartanburg, South Carolina. He graduated from Wofford College in Spartanburg in 1942 and served in the Navy Reserve from 1942 through 1946. He then earned his medical degree from Vanderbilt University in 1950, went to Thomas Jefferson University Hospital for an internship and then became a pediatric resident at CHOP. From 1953 to 1955, he participated in a fellowship in developmental pediatrics at Children's, which was not yet a subspecialty. He went on to open an office in Paoli, Pennsylvania, where he practiced pediatrics until 1959. Meanwhile, Dr. Cecil taught outpatient pediatric care at CHOP.

In 1959, Dr. Cecil was appointed assistant professor of pediatrics in the School of Medicine, and he went on to become an associate professor. In 1959, he also embarked on what would become his signature achievement; he was appointed director of child development at CHOP. With support from the William T. Grant Foundation, he established the Division of Child Development and Rehabilitation for children with physical disabilities, learning difficulties and developmental problems. Residents who studied under him learned child development, how to be part of a multidisciplinary team and how to counsel parents.

In 1969, Dr. Cecil was named CEO and medical director of Children's Seashore House in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the first pediatric rehabilitation hospital in the nation. Founded in 1872 as a summer getaway for several dozen city children suffering from various maladies, it grew under his leadership into a respected medical center. Dr. Cecil spearheaded the relocation of Children's Seashore House to a site adjacent to CHOP in the late 1980s; it is now part of CHOP. He became an emeritus associate professor of pediatrics in 1989, and in 1990, the Henry S. Cecil, MD, Endowed Chair in Rehabilitative Medicine was created; Susan Levy, a CHOP attending physician, is its first and current occupant.

"In the early 1980s, he was a leader in providing care for children with special health-care, disability, and rehabilitation needs," said Dr. Levy. "He was a forerunner in deciding that children with these needs needed special treatment. He was a man who was ahead of his time with a commitment to this very special population."

Dr. Cecil is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Marvin Bryson Cecil; children, Rebecca, David and Anne; stepdaughters Jennifer Alderman and Elizabeth Beers; two grandsons; and four step-grandchildren.