

Dr. Brien R. Lang

February 6, 1935 - March 29, 2023



Dr. Brien R. Lang, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, passed away on Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at the age of 88.

Brien was born to Thurmon L. and Wilma D. (Crandall) Lang on February 6, 1935 in Detroit, Michigan and was raised with his sister, Ida Marie, in Saginaw, Michigan. After graduating from Arthur Hill High School, he attended Albion College where he was a poll vaulter on the track & field team and was a member of the Sigma Chi fraternity. He met the love of his life Jo A. (Miller) at Albion College. Brien graduated with a Chemistry degree from

Albion College in 1956 and worked for two years as a chemist for Dow Chemical. He often joked that his job was to make saran wrap less sticky.

Brien and Jo married on September 7, 1957 just as he began his Dental School studies in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan. While in dental school they started their family and their son Kevin was born in 1961, just prior to his graduation in 1961. Brien joined a group dental practice in Saginaw, Michigan but returned to the U of M SOD in 1963 for a Master of Science (MS) degree in Removable Prosthodontics. Over the next few years, Brien practiced in Saginaw and Detroit while the family became complete with the addition of Lisa, and Beth.

Upon completion of his MS degree, he accepted an appointment at Michigan as an Assistant Professor in 1965, became a Full Professor in 1972 and was named Chair of the Complete Denture Department and Director of the Graduate Program in Denture Prosthodontics. He was hired the youngest department chair, and for 30 years, he served as Chairman of the Department of Prosthodontics at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry where he contributed to the education of more than (2,800) predoctoral DDS students and (71) MS students in Prosthodontics and contributed to the body of prosthodontic knowledge through major research studies and publications. The most rewarding aspect of his career was teaching and mentoring his students. Of all the accolades he received over the course of his time at Michigan, he was most proud multiple times he was awarded with the Paul Gibbons

Award for Teaching Excellence because it came from his students. He established the Nobel Biocare/ University of Michigan Center for Excellence for the advancement of academic and scientific knowledge in oral health care and human services. He retired from the U of M SOD in 1998 as Professor Emeritus after serving 33 years on the faculty.

Upon “retirement”, he also served as the Scientific Committee Chair for Nobel BioCare for 10 years, developing 23 educational programs in 18 countries, the Chair of Editorial Counsel for the Journal of Prosthodontic Dentistry, served for 2 years as the President of the American Board of Prosthodontics, and the President of the Academy of Prosthodontics, where he was honored with the Distinguished Service Award at the Academy of Prosthodontics Centennial Meeting, an honor he deeply humbled by receiving at the end of a long career.

Brien was a true “Michigan Man”. Outside of Brien’s career, he could often be found enjoying Michigan Football. He was a member of the Presidents Club at U of M and was proud to be a fan for over 50 years. Brien also spent 20 years coaching Amateur Baseball in Ann Arbor, leading to a win at the Championship World Series. His picture with his team can be found at The Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY. Brien found relaxation and interest in golf and played many rounds of golf. While an owner of an Indian in his college years, his love for riding motorcycles and the brassy sound of a motorcycle often lead to him striking up a conversation with anyone that rode Harley Davidson Motorcycles. Brien was known for his sweet tooth. He always had a drawer with a stash of York Peppermint Patties, Oreos, Fudgies, Snickers, and chocolate chip cookies.

Brien is survived by his beloved wife of 67 years, Jo Ann Lang; his loving children, Kevin Jon (Kelli) Lang, Lisa Ann Lang, and Beth Ellen Lang; dearest grandchildren, Sara (Joseph) Smith and Jessica (Frank) Schymik; and great-grandchildren, Charlotte Rose Smith and Daniel Frank Schymik. Brien is also remembered by his many students, colleagues, teammates, and friends.

He is preceded in death by his loving parents, Thurmon L. and Wilma D. Lang and sister, Ida Marie Minnis.

The Lang family would like to recognize the Chelsea Retirement Community: Kresge Healthcare and Rehab Center for the exceptional service. A specific thank you is extended to the 2nd floor nurses and staff that cared for Brien and the Lang family.