

Dr. Harold R. Ortman

Dec. 19, 1917 – Oct. 14, 2016



Dr. Harold R. Ortman, a dentist and longtime professor in the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine, died Friday under hospice care in Wesley Rehabilitation Center, Getzville, after a short illness. He was 98.

Born in Buffalo, he attended Bennett High School and earned his undergraduate degree from UB before graduating cum laude from the UB Dental School in 1941.

He joined the Dental School faculty upon graduation and became a professor and chairman of the Department of Removable Prosthodontics, which he was instrumental in establishing in 1964.

The school's graduate prosthodontics clinic is named in his honor.

A popular lecturer known for his attention to students and his technical excellence, Dr. Ortman personally reviewed every set of dentures for every patient served by the dental school.

He authored many scientific articles and contributed to several dental textbooks. He also presented demonstration clinics, courses and lectures throughout the U.S. and Canada, and in South America, South Korea, Thailand and Egypt. He became a professor emeritus in 1988.

He also was a member of the clinical staff of the U.S. Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Md., and the Veterans Affairs Medical Centers in Buffalo and Batavia. He was a past president of the American Prosthodontic Society.

While teaching at UB, he also maintained a private practice for more than 60 years, retiring in the early 2000s.

He was proud that he, his father, Dr. Harold T. Ortman, and his son, Dr. Lance Ortman, provided dental care and dental education in the Buffalo area for more than 100 years.

In an article, "The Ortman Era," in the Winter 2011 issue of UB Dental School magazine, it was noted that Dr. Ortman "worked 16-hour days. He started his day seeing patients in his home office at 3800 Main St. near the South Campus, hiked across the Grover Cleveland golf course at mid-morning to teach in Farber Hall, returned to his office late afternoon to see more patients, stopped for dinner and then continued working until late evening."

An avid outdoorsman despite his busy schedule, he found time to fish, hunt and shoot skeet with his friends. He and his wife also traveled and photographed around the world.

His wife, the former Virginia Love, died in 2005.

Survivors include four sons, Jeffrey, Dr. Lance, Jay and Paul; two stepsons, William and Bruce; 13 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.