Michael K. Cahalan

April 26, 1949 ~ March 9, 2019

Michael K. Cahalan, Professor and former chairman of Anesthesiology at the University of Utah Hospitals, passed away in Salt Lake City on Saturday, March 9, at the age of 69. He battled leukemia for several months.

Michael was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where he attended Mercersburg Academy. He went on to Harvard University where he was an All-American swimmer, serving as captain of the swim team and winning many collegiate medals. Michael graduated from Temple University Medical School, completed his medical internship at Milton S. Hershey University Medical Center and residency and fellowship in Anesthesiology at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). He then joined the faculty at UCSF where he served as the Chief of Anesthesia for Pediatric and Adult Cardiac Surgery for most of his 22 years. His research interest primarily involved a then-new technology, Transesophageal Echocardiography. He used the first equipment brought to the United States in 1980 demonstrating the utility of the technology which permits real-time imaging of the beating heart during surgery and is now standard-of-care. In 2001, Dr. Cahalan became Professor and Chair of the Department of Anesthesiology at the University of Utah School of Medicine. He served as chairman for 15 years and remained on the faculty until his death.

Dr. Cahalan's professional life was characterized by success in research, teaching, clinical care and administration. He authored numerous scientific articles and book chapters and served as editor of multiple major medical journals and books. He was a visiting professor or invited speaker over 200 times around the world. He mentored generations of anesthesiology residents and faculty colleagues in San Francisco and Salt Lake City demonstrating a keen ability to assess talent and help individuals develop their strengths. His leadership style was always congenial and fair-minded.

During his anesthesia training in San Francisco, Michael met and married Marianne Troy, who was the head cardiac surgery nurse at UCSF. They shared a vibrant and active life for over 42 years and spent most of their leisure time together. Golf, fishing, swimming, camping, cooking and travel were among his passions.

Dr. Cahalan will perhaps be best remembered for his character , calm, kind, funny and ready to entertain with a story. His point of view was informed by compassion and a strong moral compass. He put others at ease and accomplished more with persuasion than exertion of his power.

He is survived by his loving wife Marianne; sister, Beth Gillmor of Austin, Texas; brother and sister-in-law Thomas and Linda Cahalan of Park City, Utah and a large extended family and circle of friends.

A celebration of Dr. Cahalan's remarkable life will be announced at a later date.

Donations in his name may be sent to the Huntsman Cancer Institute. https://give.huntsmancancer.org