



Regrets to inform you

Our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Walter B. Goldfarb MD, who passed away on Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at the age of 88 at his home on Bowdoin Street in Portland, where he had lived for 50+ years; the only home he ever owned.

He was born on September 2, 1933 in Boston; the oldest of four children of Daniel C. Goldfarb MD and Helen Fish. He was graduated from Brookline High School in 1951 and with honors from Brown University in 1955, majoring in American and English literature, and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. It was at college that he met and subsequently married his classmate, Marcia Finberg of Portland. She predeceased him in 2013 after 58 years of marriage. After receiving his MD degree from Tufts University School of Medicine in 1959, he began 6 years of surgical residency training at Barnes Hospital/Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri where he was an instructor in surgery from 1963-1965.



In July 1965 he and his family moved to Portland, his wife's hometown and at her insistent suggestion, to begin the practice of surgery at Maine Medical Center and Mercy Hospital. A suggestion for which he was eternally grateful. In March 1966 he was drafted into the US Army—physicians could be drafted up to age 35 at that time. After duty at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas he became chief of surgery at the 600 bed Ireland Army Hospital at Fort Knox, Kentucky. It was professionally a very active 2 years as the Vietnam conflict was at its height. He was struck by the irony that although he was a captain and chief of surgery, he was outranked by the OR nurses, surgical residents, and nurse anesthetists—all majors or lieutenant colonels—but he was still in charge. He considered serving in the Army as a privilege and a worthwhile rewarding experience both personally and professionally. He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal and was commissioned as a Kentucky Colonel during his tenure there.

In March 1968 he and the family returned to Portland to resume his surgical practice which continued for the next 35 years. He retired in 2003 after many years as chief of General Surgery at Maine Medical Center. Over the years he was an active member of the staff at MMC serving in a variety of leadership positions including President of the medical staff from 1978-1980. He was a longtime trustee of MMC and a founding trustee of MaineHealth for 12 years. He took great pride in and actively participated in the growth and development of the Department of Surgery at MMC. The transition from an excellent community teaching hospital

department of surgery to an active full-complement university department of surgery, training 4-5 residents in each of the 5 years of the program, is something for which the greater Portland community, as well as the State of Maine, can be justly proud. Indeed many of the MMC-trained surgical residents have remained in state providing excellent care in their communities.

His involvement in the training of surgical residents and medical students over the years gave him great satisfaction—witnessing the growth, development, and maturation of young interns and residents into competent safe surgeons. The department of Surgery at MMC has a national reputation for excellent training and is highly sought after by candidates from throughout the country. Dr. Goldfarb was recognized on two occasions as Teacher of the Year by the surgical residents.

He always considered the practice of surgery to be a blessing and a great privilege, and he was eternally grateful for the trust and confidence his patients displayed over the many years. He was always available to answer their calls. He was especially grateful for the kind, highly skilled, and compassionate care shown by his colleagues and associates toward patients—particularly the operating room personnel—both OR nurses and technicians—at MMC and Mercy Hospital—who were of immense help to him and his patients.

In retirement he remained active for ten years teaching third year medical students in weekly surgical seminars. He was Clinical Professor of Surgery at the University of Vermont and then at Tufts University School of Medicine when MMC changed its medical school affiliation. One thing he particularly enjoyed was the regular Monday luncheons at DiMillos with a group of compatible retired MMC colleagues.

Dr. Goldfarb was a member of multiple medical and surgical societies including the American College of Surgeons, the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons, Society of Surgeons of the Alimentary Tract; as well as past membership in the AMA, Maine Medical Association, and Cumberland County Medical Society, serving as vice-president in 1977. He was most active in the New England Surgical Society, serving in leadership roles over the years including society President in 2004—the 9th surgeon from Maine in the society which was founded in 1916. His presidential address paid homage to Frederic Henry Gerrish MD—1845-1920—a graduate of Portland High School and Bowdoin and a founding physician of Maine General Hospital in 1872, which became MMC. Dr. Gerrish was a national figure having made seminal contributions in both Surgery and Public Health. He has been considered to be the greatest physician/surgeon in the history of our state. Dr. Goldfarb was also active in the Boston Surgical Society serving on the executive committee for 6 years and as vice-president in 2005—only the 2nd Maine surgeon so honored by the society founded in 1915. He wrote 40 articles and two book chapters in the surgical literature. His most recent articles documented the rich surgical history of Portland and the old Maine General Hospital. There were several national figures in American surgery teaching and practicing locally in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

He served as a trustee over the years of the Portland Concert Association, Portland Chamber Music Festival, YMCA, and the Maine chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Association. In addition he was a longtime trustee of the Portland Museum of Art serving as vice-president in 2011, and he was named an Honorary Trustee in 2018. A member of the Collections Committee, his major interest was 19th century American art about which he studied, viewed, and collected. He was a donor of major American paintings to the PMA, including works by John Frederick Peto, William Michael Harnett, John Haberle, Fitz Henry Lane, Martin Johnson Heade, J.F. Kensett, Sanford R. Gifford and others. The pride he felt in the growth and

development of the PMA from a small regional museum to an art institution of national stature was equal to that he felt for the Maine Medical Center—that is both institutions have helped to make Portland the great city it is today.

His retirement years were also busy with extensive travel with his wife Marcia, oboe lessons, PMA activities, fly fishing with Marcia, and teaching medical students. He was a longtime—55+ years—avid squash player whose almost manic enthusiasm on the court far outpaced his playing skills. He was a longtime member of the New York Athletic Club. Also in retirement he continued his long interest in studying the Latin poets, finally completing his extensive review of the works of the father and son poets Gluteus Maximus and Gluteus Minimus; enough so that he could finally put them behind him.

He recently reflected that age had given him the ability at last to see his own shortcomings even if it had robbed him of the time he needed to remedy them. It was said of him that as his arteries hardened his heart softened. He had a long, interesting and consequential life. He was sui generis and also generous.

Walter married his classmate Marcia on December 17, 1955 in Portland. She was his best friend and his support system in a marriage that was solid and lasting as a result of her unwavering support of his demanding training years and his career, and her steadfast devotion to their family. He never really recovered from her loss. His greatest pride and joy were his three children—all physicians—and 6 grandchildren: Jennifer Aronson MD of Cape Elizabeth (Fred Aronson MD) and their children Jonathan and Max; Adam Goldfarb MD of Charlottesville, Va. (Erica) and their children Natalie and Sarah; and Miriam Goldfarb MD of Williamstown, Mass. (Marc Vincenz) and her children Sophia and Pablo. Their time together celebrating significant holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays were precious. Whether skiing in Vancouver B.C. or Austria, fishing and horseback riding out West, snorkeling in Nevis, going to Red Sox games, or just hanging out together held great memories for the whole family.

He was predeceased by his parents, his beloved Marcia, and by his granddaughter Sarah Mary Goldfarb. He is survived in addition to his three children by five grandchildren: Jonathan and Max Aronson, Natalie Sosnowski, Sophia and Pablo Santos; as well as his brothers Harold Goldfarb MD, Daniel Goldfarb Jr. and sister Maxine Friedman; and many nieces and nephews, and lastly by his great grandchildren Julian and Sunday Lucille Sosnowski.

Written by the deceased

Ave Atque Vale

Funeral services will be held at Temple Beth El, 400 Deering Avenue in Portland on Friday, October 15, 2021 at 11:00am with interment following at Temple Beth El Memorial Park, 1 Johnson Road in Portland.

Zichrono l'vracha - may Walter's memory be for a blessing.

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