

In Memoriam: Dr. Elihu Pugsley Rees

The Faculty of Medicine is saddened to hear of the passing of retired faculty member and pioneer in neonatal care in Nova Scotia, Dr. Elihu Pugsley Rees, on July 10, 2025, at the age of 86.

Born in Boston and educated at Phillips Exeter Academy, Dr. Rees began his medical journey at McGill University, earning his MD in 1961. He completed his specialization in neonatology in Montreal before spending two years in Pittsburgh as a research fellow. In 1970, he made Halifax his home, a move that would shape the trajectory of neonatal care in the Maritimes for decades to come.

Dr. Rees led the Neonatal Unit at the IWK Health Centre, where he became known for his dedication to innovation in neonatal intensive care. A committed educator, he taught generations of Dalhousie medical students and residents, always with a focus on patient-centred care and collaborative practice. He was a strong early advocate for the expanded role of neonatal nurses and deeply valued the expertise of his interprofessional team.

His contributions extended well beyond the walls of the IWK. As co-director of the Reproductive Care Program of Nova Scotia for 14 years, Dr. Rees played a central role in improving maternal and newborn health across the province. He was instrumental in launching Nova Scotia's neonatal transport program, helping to ensure critically ill newborns could access the specialized care they needed regardless of geography.

Known for his intellect, wit, and warm mentorship, Dr. Rees brought humour and humanity into his practice. He also brought people together; whether through summer gatherings with his team on the Northwest Arm or through his leadership in the Canadian chapter of the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin, celebrating the culture of Burgundy wines.

Dr. Rees retired after 28 years of dedicated service, leaving a legacy of clinical excellence, system-level impact, and joyful camaraderie. He approached medicine and life with curiosity, generosity, and integrity, and inspired others to do the same.

He will be deeply missed by his colleagues, former students, and all those whose lives he touched throughout his distinguished career.

[Read his full obituary.](#)