



Jean Dussault, MD

Dr. Jean Dussault's contribution to humanity through his application of medical research is nothing short of monumental. He developed a neonatal diagnostic test for congenital hypothyroidism that has been used on over 300 million infants around the world and has saved an estimated 100,000 children from irreversible intellectual disabilities. Dr. Dussault's legacy is truly remarkable.

Born and raised in Quebec City, Dr. Dussault received his medical degree at Université Laval before embarking on a research career as a fellow in endocrinology at the University of Toronto and the University of California.

Returning to Université Laval in 1971, Dr. Dussault spent the next 32 years as an active professor and scientist, eventually serving as the Director of the Unity of Molecular Medicine and Genetics at the Centre Hospitalier de l'Université Laval (CHUL) Research Centre from 1986 to 1996.

The incidence of congenital hypothyroidism is one in 4,000 births. Using Dr. Dussault's simple test on a heel prick blood sample within two weeks of birth, thyroid deficient states can be detected in newborns to avoid varying degrees of intellectual disabilities and to increase the chance of leading a normal life. This application of scientific discovery to eliminate a serious global health problem is an outstanding example of the finest tradition of public health.

Despite Dr. Dussault's extraordinary achievement, he remained a compassionate, gentle and modest man. An outstanding teacher and dedicated clinician, numerous researchers trained by Dr. Dussault can now be found in leading endocrine laboratories around the world. He was a prolific investigator, having over 200 papers published, and gave numerous lectures at national and international conferences.

Dr. Dussault's accomplishments brought him recognition by his peers. At the age of 42, in 1982, he was nominated for the Nobel Prize. Among his numerous awards, he was elected a Member of the Order of Canada in 1988 and the National Order of Quebec in 2000.