



Walter C. Mackenzie, MD

Dr. Walter C. Mackenzie was a true visionary and surgical statesman who fostered the concept of modern academic health centers to enhance education, research, and patient care during his illustrious career. His influential, congenial and forward thinking style penetrated the spirit of the entire University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine as he built strong medicine and surgical programs and assumed tremendous leadership in medical education. Today, the modern Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre sits on the University campus so named in recognition of his vision and venerable leadership.

Dr. Mackenzie received his BSc in 1927 and MD in 1932 from Dalhousie University and was honored as one of two Malcolm Honor Society Medal Winners. He began surgery training at McGill then moved to the Mayo Clinic in 1933 to complete his MSc.

In 1938, his new surgical practice in Edmonton was soon interrupted by service in the Royal Canadian Navy where he was rapidly promoted to Surgeon-Commander. He retired in 1945 having been awarded a Star Medal, the CVSM Medal, War Medal and a Defense Medal for his service to Canada.

From instructor at the University of Alberta, Dr. Mackenzie rose to Professor and Chair of the Department of Surgery in 1950. In short order he established seven sub-specialty departments and implemented rigorous standards for the selection of staff, assessing soft skills alongside research achievements, not a typical approach in the early sixties. As Dean of the Faculty of Medicine from 1959 to 1974 he transformed the medical school with a commitment to excellence, growing research funding from \$500,000 to well over \$4 million, attracting world class talent to work in an equally world class environment while helping to build the McEachern Laboratory and the Surgical-Medical Research Laboratory. His proactive work with Premier Peter Lougheed inspired the concept of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research.

Dr. Mackenzie was president of 12 of the 25 medical organizations to which he belonged including the American College of Surgeons and Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Conducting a very busy surgical practice in conjunction with his various medical administrative responsibilities, he published 80 peer-reviewed papers and was recognized with four international fellowships, three honorary degrees and many prestigious awards including the Order of Canada during its inaugural year and the very prestigious FNG Starr Award by the Canadian Medical Association.