

Dr. Thomas Starzl was a brilliant researcher, an inspired innovator, a talented teacher, and a great surgeon.

Born in Le Mars, Iowa on March 11, 1926, he was compelled to become a doctor by his mother's death from breast cancer. In 1952 he graduated from Northwestern with an MD and a PhD in neuroscience. He continued his surgical training at Johns Hopkins and then the University of Miami. He returned to Northwestern in 1958, where he began to focus on transplantation. He initially worked on dogs, and within a year "was confident that this operation was not only feasible, but could someday be applied for the treatment of human disease."

Dr. Starzl became chief of surgery at the Denver VA Hospital in 1961. He performed his first successful kidney transplant in 1962 and continued at an unprecedented pace, performing 63 more in the following year and a half. The results of these trailblazing surgeries quickly shaped the field and became established procedure.

He was determined to meet the even more daunting challenge of liver transplantation. He performed the first human liver transplant in 1962, and four years later did the world's first successful human liver transplant.

Dr. Starzl continued his work in Denver until 1980, when he joined the University of Pittsburgh surgery department to continue his practice and research. After retiring from clinical practice in 1991, he remained active in research as a Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Pittsburgh. The Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute is located in a research building on the campus. He won many major awards, including the Medawar Prize (1992), the Presidential Medal of Science (2005), and the Lasker Award for Clinical Science (2012). He died in 2017 at the age of 90.

Known as the father of transplantation, Dr. Starzl transformed the field through his practice, his research, and his hugely influential publications. One example was his book on kidney transplants, *Experience in Renal Transplantation*, which was the most cited textbook of the 20th century. According to the Institute for Scientific Information, Dr. Starzl's many publications have been cited more than any other researcher in the world.

His introduction of new drugs and drug combinations that counter organ rejection greatly expanded the possibilities for successful transplantation. He also made major contributions in many other areas, including organ preservation and procurement.

Dr. Starzl trained many gifted surgeons, who have been saving lives across the country and around the world. Since his first successful liver transplant, liver transplantation has saved more than 130,000 lives. All of these people, their children, and their children's children have Dr. Starzl to thank.