

John R. Tobin Biography



John R. Tobin, MD - Class of 1934 - (Dec. 18, 1916 - July 29, 2007) Dr. Tobin came to Loyola's new medical center in 1969 as a veteran cardiologist and teacher at Cook County Hospital with a sterling medical resume that provided the connections he needed to quickly staff the Maywood hospital with top medical talent.

“He was able to draw a lot of talent” from Cook County Hospital, said Dr. Rolf Gunnar, who became chief of cardiology at Loyola in 1972 and previously worked with Dr. Tobin at Cook County. “Loyola became known as County West.”

Dr. Tobin remained chairman of the medical center’s department of medicine until 1982, then became dean of Loyola’s Stritch School of Medicine. He retired in 1987.

An active clinician and teacher, he also was chairman of the department of medicine for the Stritch School of Medicine through his time at the medical center.

Dr. Tobin kept in touch with his best students and hired many of them for his staff, Gunnar said.

“He loved and was concerned with teaching. He really endeared himself to the students,” Gunnar said. “He was not always easy because he demanded quality. But if you gave him full attention, he was a wonderful person to work with.”

“He expected excellence and accepted nothing less,” said Dr. Leonard Vertuno, who was hired at Loyola by Dr. Tobin in 1977.

Dr. Tobin’s father was a doctor in Elgin. Two of his brothers also became doctors.

As a boy, he was impressed by the medical field because on Wednesdays, his dad could hang a “closed” sign on his door. He would take his sons to a Cubs game at Wrigley Field, Mary Kay Tobin said. Dr. Tobin also remembered going on rounds with his father in a horse and buggy.

By the time World War II broke out, he had received a bachelor’s degree in science from Notre Dame and a medical degree from the University of Chicago. Enlisting in the Army, he was a battalion surgeon with the 85th Infantry Division as it fought its way across North Africa and into Italy, eventually marching triumphantly into Rome. After the war, he did a residency and fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, then followed some of his cohorts from medical school to Spokane, Wash., to work at the Rockwood Clinic.

A desire to teach, born in the admiration he had for his own professors, led him to Cook County Hospital, where he oversaw residents from Loyola beginning in the mid-1950s.

He also was in charge of the hospital’s blood bank and ushered in the relatively new practice of storing donated blood in plastic bags rather than bottles, which drastically reduced infection rates.

From 1965 to 1972, Dr. Tobin was chief of the cardiology section for the Stritch School of Medicine.

His free time was devoted to golf. Gunnar recalled him once telling his colleagues at Cook County that he wouldn’t be in because he had to see a sick grandmother. The next day, the doctors clipped a newspaper article that showed Dr. Tobin winning his Elgin club’s championship and posted it prominently at the hospital, much to everyone’s amusement.

Dr. Tobin's wife, Margaret, died in 1996. In addition to his daughter, he is survived by a sister, Alice Branagan; and two grandchildren.