



## OBITUARY

# Prof. James Tait Goodrich

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Prof. James “Jim” Tait Goodrich – A heart of gold - April 16, 1946 – March 30, 2020+

James Tait Goodrich was born on April 16, 1946 in Portland, Oregon, United States, the son of Richard Goodrich and Gail (Josselyn) Goodrich.

Dr. Goodrich served as a Marine officer during the Vietnam War, during which time he decided his next step would be to pursue a medical career. Not only was he an elite surgeon, but over the years he was also a generous mentor and teacher who shared his craft with many young surgeons who wanted to follow in his footsteps.

During the Tet Offensive, he spotted a Vietnamese surgeon in a medical tent opening up a soldier’s head. “Cool,” he thought. “I want to do that” (1). Upon return to the USA, Jim married Judy Loudin on December 27, 1970, the love of his life who gave him the confidence and support to pursue his dreams.

Dr. Goodrich completed his undergraduate work at the University of California, Irvine and his graduate studies at the School of Arts and Sciences of Columbia University (1972), receiving his Masters and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in 1978 and 1980, respectively. He received his Medical Degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. After an internship at Columbia- Presbyterian Medical Center (1980-1981), he completed his residency training at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City and the New York Neurological Institute (1981-1986). He also holds the rank of Professor Contralto of Neurological Surgery at the University of Palermo in Palermo, Italy.

He was Director of the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery at the Children’s Hospital of Montefiore Health System and he served as a Professor of Clinical Neurological Surgery, Pediatrics, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine since 1998 (2).

Dr. James T. Goodrich dedicated his life to saving children with complex neurological conditions. He had a particular interest in the treatment of craniofacial abnormalities. He was a pioneer in this field and developed a multi-stage approach for separating craniopagus twins who have their brain and skull conjoined. In 2016, he famously led a team of 40 doctors in a 27-hour procedure to separate the McDonald twins. Throughout his distinguished career, he became known as the world’s leading expert on this lifesaving procedure. He has been consulted on hundreds of cases, and he routinely traveled the world sharing his vast knowledge and expertise with colleagues (3,4).

In Brazil, Dr. Goodrich played a very important role in leading the processes to successfully separate craniopagus sets in Ribeirao Preto (2017-2018), and in Brasilia (2019).

A classical multistage surgery was performed to separate the Ribeirao Preto conjoined twins, and Dr. Goodrich participated on all the neurosurgical procedures as a great mentor. In the final operation, on October 28, 2019, some members of Montefiore Hospital medical staff (Dr. Oren Tepper, plastic surgeon, Dr. Carlene Broderick, pediatric anesthesiologist and Kamilah A. Dowling, nurse) also worked alongside Jim and the Brazilian team. An extraordinary and humble man, his words after the first surgical step, during an interview for a TV channel, were that in “this particular surgery we were able to do more than we expected because the anatomy was very good and the team had exceptional skills that made the difference”.

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Dr. Goodrich was a chief supporter of the Latin American Pediatric Neurosurgery Course (LACPN), having participated in all editions since 2004. In these events, he did not hesitate to share his knowledge during the hands-on sessions and, likewise, his wonderful conferences. Prof. Goodrich was officially honored by the Brazilian Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery during the “XII Brazilian Congress of Pediatric Neurosurgery”, in Florianópolis, Brazil.

Dr. Goodrich was a gentle and truly caring man. He did not crave the limelight and was beloved by his colleagues and staff. He has authored numerous book chapters and articles on Pediatric Neurosurgery and is known worldwide as a prominent lecturer in this field. Outside his work, he was also known for his passion for historical artifacts, travelling, wine, and surfing.

Dr. Goodrich was an incredible human being. In March 30th, 2020, he passed away after complications due to Covid-19 (5). In that day the world has become a little less bright without Jim. Our sympathy and prayers go to his wife Judy, his three sisters, and all those who were close to him

### Prizes and awards

Fellow of the Royal Society Medicine (London). Member of the International Society Pediatric Neurosurgeons, Worshipful Society Apothecaries (London), New York Academy of Medicine (Melicow award 1980), American Association History of Medicine (Sir William Osler medal 1977-1978), American Medical Association, British Brain Research Association, European Brain Research Association, Friends of Columbia University Libraries, Friends of Osler Library of McGill University, New York Academy of Sciences, American Association of Neurological Surgeons (chairman of the section on history of neurological surgery), Congress of Neurological Surgeons, Medical History Society of New Jersey, ISIS History of Science Society, Society for Bibliography of Natural History (London), Columbia Presbyterian Medical Society, University of California Alumni Association, Society of Ancient Medicine, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Osler Society, Les Amis du Vin, South Coast Wine Explorers.

### Brazilian Pediatric Neurosurgery Society memories:

Charles Kondagesky (SBNPed member)

No words can describe how sorry we are for the loss of Professor Goodrich. He made such an immense impact on so many lives and souls, there in the Bronx, as well as throughout the world. I personally had the privilege to have spent some time in his unit back in 2006. During those days I was constantly in awe, realizing that in addition to his indisputably sharp technical skills, Professor Goodrich demonstrated

himself as being a passionate and kind person - a person that really cared for those around him. Professor Goodrich attended several of our neurosurgical meetings here in Brazil and was our Guest of Honor for the 2017 Brazilian Pediatric Neurosurgical Society Congress, held in Florianópolis. Our hearts reach out to his family, friends, and colleagues in New York and around the world in this moment of pain and sorrow.

Tatiana Protzenko (SBNPed member)

Great souls leave an impression on anyone they come across.

The pediatric neurosurgery world will remember Professor Goodrich as a kind and brilliant man, always ready to help and share his knowledge with Brazilian colleagues

My deepest condolences to the family and all friends.

Marcelo Volpon (SBNPed member and secretary general)

Ars longa, vita brevis –an aficionado in the History of Medicine and Arts, as we all know he was, James Tait Goodrich must have followed the teachings of Hippocrates: he certainly understood, in his early life, that both science and love to mankind and humanism could not be separate, and therefore practiced medicine and lived his own life according to these principles. As is the case for real geniuses, he truly deserves all manifestations of positive consideration and affection towards him. I was fortunate to have spent a few weeks watching him work in the Bronx some eight years ago and witnessed his professional dedication and kindness in the daily relationships with people he very much treated respectfully. He will be missed greatly. Requiescat in pace.

### References

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