



Jacquelin PERRY

(MAY 31, 1918 - MARCH 11, 2013)

Dr. Jacquelin PERRY, a world-renowned orthopedic surgeon who developed **revolutionary treatments** that helped polio patients regain movement, has died at the age of 94. Her death was **announced by the Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center**, the hospital she worked for nearly 60 years. **Dr. PERRY's life work is perfectly encapsulated** in her own words, "most doctors go into medicine to save lives. I'm more interested in getting handicapped persons functioning again".

Here's what you should know about this medical pioneer.

She was passionate about medicine since childhood

PERRY, the only child of her parents, recalls that she knew "at the age of 10" that she wanted to be a doctor. The precocious PERRY would read every medical book in the Los Angeles library.

She was one of the first female surgeons

PERRY paved the way for women in medicine. She was one of the first women to be certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery but she was also the first woman orthopedic surgeon to graduate from University of California San Francisco. The Times Honored her as the 1959 Woman of the Year in Science. But PERRY was not just revolutionary because of her gender, she was revolutionary because of her specialty. In a published profile in the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Dr. PERRY said: "It was definitely not a field for women back then. People said it was too strenuous, too mechanical. My medical school class had 10% women (seven out of seventy-six), pretty good numbers for those days. Orthopaedic surgery wasn't very popular in those days, it was mostly braces and buckles, not the surgical specialty it is today."

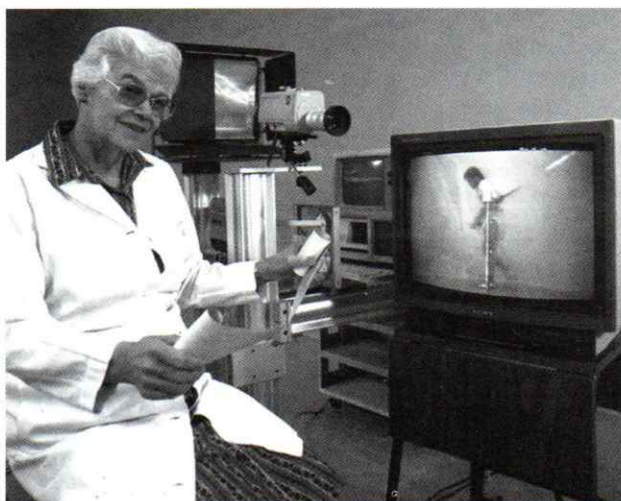
She was in the army

Upon receiving her bachelor's degree in Physical Education at the UCLA in 1940, PERRY joined the army and trained to be a physical therapist, receiving a certificate from Walter Reed Army General Hospital in Washington. During Second World War, PERRY began treating polio patients in Hot Springs, Arkansas. It was this experiences that inspired her to study medicine in UC San Francisco.

She revolutionized Polio treatment

PERRY was able to start a **surgical program** for polio patients who had been **disabled and paralyzed** due to the disease. In the 1960's PERRY has a 13-year-old polio patient could only look forward to a life dominated by





paralysis and marked by an early death. Then PERRY, performed an innovative procedure to fuse the girl's entire spine and neck, making breathing easier and permitting the child to sit up for long periods of time.

The revolutionary surgery enabled the girl to return to classes at school, go on to college and eventually complete a Ph.D. "I believe life is for living, not just existing" she said.

Decades later, some patients with post-polio symptoms of pain and weakness returned to PERRY.

She was an expert on body mechanics

With her expertise in Polio, PERRY continued to treat patients with movement problems after the disease was treated. PERRY became the country's foremost expert on gait analysis, which is essentially the study of body mechanics. PERRY's contributions to the body of knowledge of understanding human movement also included studying the use of canes, to crutches, braces and wheelchairs. She compared the effectiveness of various forms of bracing and prostheses, total joint replacements, and surgical interventions. She also studied the effects of injury in both professional and recreational athletes.

With Dr. Vernon NICKEL, she developed the "Halo" the device that uses a ring screwed into a patient's skull to lock the spine and neck.

She worked up until her death

After a brain artery blockage forced PERRY to stop operating, she founded Rancho's Pathokinesiology Laboratory in 1968 to analyze the biomechanics of walking. She served as chief of the department until 1996 and continued to consult in semi-retirement. She continued to work until her death. "As far as I'm concerned, I've never worked," PERRY told The Times in 1999. "I do what I like to do."

Dr. PERRY never married and has no immediate survivors. She died at 94 years after suffering from Parkinson's disease. She leaves behind her medical legacy.

REFERENCE

<http://www.heavy.com/news/2013/03/jacquelin-perry-dies-polio-surgeon/>