



Happy 90th Birthday Dr. Cyril H. Wecht!

The American College of Legal Medicine would like to pay tribute to Cyril H. Wecht, MD, JD, FCLM, one of the College's Founding Fathers, and one of our country's foremost forensic pathologists on the occasion of his 90th birthday.

Dr. Wecht's incredible career has spanned a wide diversity of positions. Earlier in his life, Dr. Wecht served as concertmaster for the University of Pittsburgh orchestra during college, served as a Captain in the United States Air Force, was Allegheny County, Pennsylvania's County Coroner for decades, and was elected Chairman of the Allegheny County Democratic Party and Board of Commissioners.

As a forensic scientist, Dr. Wecht has worked on numerous high-profile cases including John F. Kennedy, JonBenet Ramsey, Elvis Presley, Anna Nicole Smith, Sunny von Bulow, and Laci Peterson, among others. Dr. Wecht has performed over 21,000 autopsies and supervised or consulted on over 41,000 more. He has written 17 books and more than 550 professional publications. Dr. Wecht also is an editorial board member of more than 20 national and international medical-legal and forensic scientific publications.

In late 2020, he released his most recent book, "The Life and Deaths of Cyril Wecht: Memoirs of America's Most Controversial Forensic Pathologist." After becoming the first non-government forensic pathologist allowed to view John F. Kennedy autopsy materials, he disputed the lone gunman/single bullet theory of JFK's assassination, launching a controversy that has lasted for over half a century. He was a consultant to Oliver Stone for the 1991 film, JFK. In the early 2000's, he ruled that a victim's death during a 2002 encounter with police was a homicide, caused by suffocation through positional asphyxiation. Although the government refused to prosecute the police officer, Dr. Wecht's report was used by the victim's family in a civil suit against the county. Dr. Wecht was portrayed by Albert Brooks in the 2015 film, Concussion, related to his support of Dr. Bennet Omalu's efforts to expose the link between chronic traumatic encephalopathy and football. And most recently, Dr. Wecht has spoken out for more sensible, focused efforts to combat COVID-19 in light of the deleterious effects of COVID restrictions including reduced access for non-Covid-related healthcare, financial devastation, isolation, and increases in suicides, mental illness, physical abuse, and food insecurity.

Currently, he is actively involved as a medical-legal and forensic science consultant, author, and lecturer. He serves as a Clinical Professor at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine and Graduate School of Public Health. He is Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Cyril H. Wecht Institute of Forensic Science and Law at Duquesne University as well as an Adjunct Professor at Duquesne's Schools of Law, Pharmacy, and Health Sciences. He served as President of the medical staff of the Department of Pathology at Saint Francis Central Hospital in Pittsburgh, where he was Chairman of the Department of Pathology.

Dr. Wecht became a member of the ACLM in 1962. He was elected Vice President in 1966 and served as President from 1968 through 1972. Under his leadership, the College published its first newsletter and began plans for a professional-quality, quarterly journal, among other things.

Dr. Wecht also has served as Chairman of the Board of the American Board of Legal Medicine and the ACLM Foundation, and he established the Wecht lecture/lunch, one of the highlights of the College's annual meeting, which has featured numerous national icons among the presenters.