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## Kenneth Swan

**Kenneth G. Swan, M.D.**  
**(October 2, 1934 - March 22, 2014)**


Ken Swan is Professor of Surgery at New Jersey Medical School in Newark. He was born in Scarsdale, New York and graduated from its high school. He attended Harvard College, where he majored in History and Science and graduated with honors. He earned his M.D. degree from Cornell University Medical College in 1960 and began an Internship and Residency in Surgery at The New York Hospital Midway through surgical residency, he was accepted for a Fellowship in Physiology from 1965-1966 with Dr. M. I. Grossman at UCLA. The focus was G.I. Physiology and, under Dr. Gene Jacobson, gastric blood flow and secretion, ultimately splanchnic blood flow and shock. Swan became a member of the American Physiological Society in 1967. He completed residency training in 1968 and, under the Berry Plan, entered the U. S. Army as Captain, Medical Corps. He served the next year in Vietnam, five months as a combat surgeon at the 71st Evac. Hospital, the next seven months as Brigade Surgeon, 196th Light Infantry, Americal Division in Chu Lai. Swan was then assigned to the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington, DC. He spent the next four years there, rose to the rank of Lt. Col. and became Director of the Division of Surgery. His research there correlated primate experimental shock and regional blood flows. Swan returned to Vietnam in 1970 on assignment by the Surgeon General to photograph combat casualty care throughout the theater. At the request of the United States Navy, Swan was deputized, along with family, to the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory, Point Barrow Alaska in the summer of 1972 and to study extremity blood flow and cold acclimatization by the Arctic wolf. In 1973 Swan left Active Duty for his current position at the New Jersey Medical School. He transferred to the USAR and became Group Surgeon, 11th Special Forces, Fort Meade, Maryland from 1973 to 1975. Subsequently he transferred to the 322nd General Hospital, Picatinny Arsenal, Dover, New Jersey. He became its Commanding Officer from 1977 to 1982.

At New Jersey Medical School Swan was appointed Associate Professor and Director of the Section of General Surgery. He developed a Vascular Surgical Section, as well as a Trauma Section, which ultimately became the first Level I Trauma Center in the State of New Jersey. He introduced the Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) Course of the American College of Surgeons to the State of New Jersey. He became Professor of Surgery in 1976 and Colonel, USAR in 1977. As a Trauma Surgeon he popularized the use of prophylactic inferior vena caval (Greenfield) filters in the management of multiple trauma victims at risk for deep venous thrombosis (DVT) and fatal pulmonary embolism (PE). He advocated, with appropriate, record-setting mortality data, the emergency mesocaval shunt for the treatment of life-threatening hemorrhage from bleeding esophageal varices secondary to cirrhosis of the liver. He introduced open gastrostomy under local anesthesia for victims of neuromuscular diseases (ALS, muscular dystrophy, etc.) causing dysphagia, and who could not tolerate endotracheal intubation/general anesthesia. He had learned this technique (*The American Surgeon*, 2001) from Mort Grossman, a self-taught, technically skillful, canine surgeon, 36 years earlier! More recently and, in collaboration with his wife and three children, Swan exposed the myth of "pressure point control" of extremity arterial hemorrhage. In that study they documented the first successful use of single tourniquets to arrest distal arterial blood flow from above and below elbow and knee (*The Journal of Trauma*, 2009).

Dr. Swan is Past President of the Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces and Past President of the Medical History Society of New Jersey. His many publications in the field of medical history emanate from his fourth-year surgical elective in the medical school curriculum, promoting student scholarship. Dr. Swan is Board Certified in General Surgery and Thoracic Surgery. He is a member of the American Surgical Association and Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. He is a Distinguished Eagle Scout. In 1991 he served as the Triage Officer for the 251st Evacuation Hospital, South Carolina Army National Guard, Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm. He retired from the Army after 30 years in 1998. He is a Flight Surgeon, Combat Medic, Master Parachutist, U.S. Army War College graduate and is HALO, Air Assault and Special Forces qualified. He still gives the annual Physiology Departmental lecture on "Shock" to the medical students at NJMS.

## Resources

**Curriculum Vitae of Kenneth Swan**  
**Video Interview of Kenneth Swan**