

## **Barrett Haik MD UTHCS Obituary**

Barrett G. Haik, MD, FACS, age 64, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, July 22, 2016, in his hometown of New Orleans, Louisiana. Dr. Haik was Hamilton Professor of Ophthalmology and Director of the Hamilton Eye Institute (HEI) at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) in Memphis, Tennessee. He was also chairman of the UTHSC Department of Ophthalmology from 1995-2012.

Since the 1960s, several visionary leaders sought to establish a world-class eye center in Memphis, but it took the unparalleled leadership of Dr. Barrett G. Haik to fulfill that vision 50 years in the making. Recruited to UTHSC by Dr. Ralph S. Hamilton in 1995, Dr. Haik was drawn to Memphis by the quality of ophthalmologists and vision scientists on full-time and clinical faculty at UTHSC. He looked forward to the challenge of developing an eye institute and working with partners such as St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (SJCRH), Baptist Memorial Healthcare, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, Memphis VA Medical Center and the Regional Medical Center.

In addition to founding HEI, he also built the ophthalmic oncology service at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, saving the lives of children with ophthalmic tumors. He made tremendous strides in the fight against retinoblastoma, a pediatric eye cancer that once took the lives of 90% of children in developing nations that were afflicted with it. Through Dr. Haik's international outreach initiatives to establish centers of excellence throughout the developing world, that mortality rate is now under 10% in many countries.

A native of New Orleans, Dr. Haik earned his medical degree at Louisiana State University. After residency at New York's Edward S. Harkness Eye Institute at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, he joined Cornell University and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. In 1986, he joined Tulane University in New Orleans as a professor of Ophthalmology. He was subsequently made program director and medical director of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital, where he trained residents from Tulane, LSU and the Ochsner Foundation. In 1991, he was named the George M. Haik, Sr., MD - St. Giles Foundation Professor of Pediatric and Adult Ophthalmic Oncology, Tulane's first endowed chair in Ophthalmology.

Dr. Haik was a member of numerous prestigious medical and scientific societies. He was past president of the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology, the American Eye Study Club, and the American Society of Ophthalmic Ultrasound; a fellow of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American College of Surgeons (for which he also served three consecutive three-year terms on the Board of Regents), and the New York Academy of Medicine; and a member of the American Ophthalmological Society.

He served as officer and committee chairman for many medical and ophthalmologic professional societies such as the Foundation Fighting Blindness, American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine, the Southern Medical Association and the New Orleans Academy of Ophthalmology. In addition, he served on the Boards of Directors of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, Eye Foundation of America and the Foundation for the Facially Disfigured. In 2011, he was appointed by Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam to the Board of the Tennessee Health Services and Development Agency.

Dr. Haik authored or co-authored more than 160 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and abstracts. He was internationally renowned as an expert in the diagnosis and management of ophthalmic tumors and received numerous grants for his research. An accomplished and enlightening educator, Dr. Haik gave hundreds of presentations in both national and international forums. He received a Healthcare Heroes Lifetime Achievement Award from the Memphis Business Journal and a Life Achievement Honor Award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Since his recruitment to UTHSC, his remarkable leadership and the intellectual support and generosity of faculty and donors transformed the Department of Ophthalmology from a small office with four academic faculty members into the acclaimed Hamilton Eye Institute, a world-class eye center that is home to more than 40 academic faculty members and lauded among the top ten eye clinics in the United States.

Dr. Haik had two children, Barrett and Claire. He was an unparalleled leader, mentor, ophthalmologist, humanitarian, physician and friend, who touched countless lives and leaves an amazing legacy. Services are being planned in both New Orleans and Memphis to honor Dr. Haik's memory.