F. James Funk, Jr, MD (1920–2008)

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F. James Funk, Jr, MD (Photograph published with courtesy of the Piedmont Hospital, Atlanta, GA.)

Jim was born in Wilmington, Delaware, and graduated from Emory University and Medical School. His orthopaedic training was at Grady Memorial Hospital, Duke University, Kennedy Hospital in Memphis, and Boston Children's Hospital. After completing his training in 1952, he returned to Atlanta and began practice at Piedmont Hospital. In 1960, Jim, Robert Wells, and Joseph (Scoot) Dimon founded the prestigious Peachtree Orthopaedic Clinic, where he worked until his retirement. Jim and Scoot performed the first total hip replacement in Atlanta in 1969, Jim performed the first arthroscopic knee surgery in Atlanta.

Forest James (Jim) Funk Jr, MD, died Saturday, December 6, 2008, at the Piedmont Hospital from complications of diverticulitis at the age of 88. The world of orthopaedics lost a giant that day.

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One of Jim's passions was sports medicine and he became the first team physician for the Atlanta Falcons and team physician for the Atlanta Braves. He was very involved with the players, and traveled extensively with the teams. He became close friends with many of the players, including Tommy Nobis. He also was a volunteer physician for athletes of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Physical fitness was a priority for Jim. He would run at least 3 miles every day and enjoyed tennis, hiking, and skiing. At the age of 63, he accompanied one of the US climbing teams to the Everest Base Camp on the Chinese side. He did not attempt to summit, but did go beyond the base camp and, at one point, fell into a small crevasse. When asked why he volunteered for the expedition, he said, "I went because I wanted to meet the kind of guys who do this kind of thing. I just think it is fun, just like walking around a golf course would be for someone else."

Jim also was involved in volunteer medicine at home and abroad. He served at the Crippled Children's Clinic in North Georgia for many years. He also volunteered in numerous third-world countries, including Ludhiana, India, and the Congo. His passion, however, was Haiti, and Jim and his partners at the Peachtree Orthopedic Clinic volunteered a couple weeks per year for more than 50 years at the Hospital Albert Schweitzer. He was instrumental in getting his partners at the Peachtree Orthopedic Clinic involved. He performed thousands of operations, including many spine fusions to correct deformities from tuberculosis. His volunteer work gave him immense satisfaction.

Jim received many distinguished awards over his long career and was involved in numerous orthopaedic organizations. He was president of the Georgia Orthopaedic Society, the Atlantic Orthopaedic Society, and the Association of Bone and Joint Surgeons (ABJS).

One of his favorite organizations was the Association of Bone and Joint Surgeons. He rarely missed a meeting and his enthusiasm was infectious. He frequently would lead the discussion groups with a novel concept or idea. He was president of ABJS from 1975 to 1976. Several years ago, at the age of 86, he traveled unaccompanied to Buenos Aires, Argentina, for the annual meeting.

Jim may have been small in stature, but his personality was larger than life. He truly will be missed by his wonderful family and the entire orthopaedic community. Jim is survived by his wife of 67 years, Florrie, and three daughters, Helen McSwain, Allie Funk, and Florrie Funk; eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.