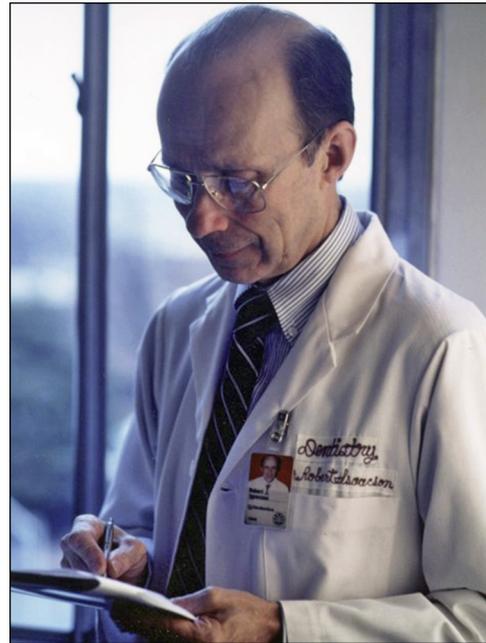


## Robert J. Isaacson, 1932-2018

**R**obert J. Isaacson, a leading orthodontic educator, researcher, and scholar, passed away peacefully at the age of 86 on September 15, 2018, near his home in Wayzata, Minnesota. Bob was born in Flushing, New York, on July 12, 1932, and grew up in New Jersey. He was a proud graduate of the University of Minnesota where he earned his BS, DDS, MSD, and PhD degrees from 1950 to 1962. He served as a Captain in the US Army from 1956 to 1958. He joined the faculty of the University of Minnesota in the Department of Orthodontics in 1962, beginning a distinguished orthodontic career. At the end of his career, from 2000 to 2012, he served as Editor-in-Chief of one of the specialty's highly respected scientific journals, *The Angle Orthodontist*.

Bob Isaacson was a visionary leader in our specialty. His ability to think “outside the box” and dream how things should be, rather than dwelling on how they were, produced consistently meaningful impacts in research, service, and teaching throughout his career. He had an exceptional ability to motivate others: colleagues, junior faculty, and staff members, empowering them to take control, work as a team, and get things done. Bob's ideas were always born of the attitude of moving ahead; he never spent time pondering the past. This was done without selfish motivation, taking steps to implement change because it was the right thing to do. He had the true leader's flair for being the originator of thoughts that were ahead of their time; he had an uncanny gift for “seeing the future.” Almost immediately after he became editor of *The Angle Orthodontist* in 2000, Bob was determined to have the entire archives of the journal digitized for electronic access. Subsequently, he moved quickly to make the journal a completely free open-access resource “in the interest of propagating the science of orthodontic research and knowledge.”

During his long career, Bob Isaacson chaired 3 orthodontic departments. He became chair of the department at the University of Minnesota in 1965 at the age of 32 after serving on the faculty for only 3 years. From 1977 to 1987, he served as professor and chair of the department of growth and development at the University of California, San Francisco. In 1987, he moved to



**Robert J. Isaacson**

Richmond, Virginia, where he assumed the position of chair of the department of orthodontics at Virginia Commonwealth University and remained there until he retired from academic service in 2001. During his time at those 3 universities, Bob published more than 100 scholarly manuscripts in scientific journals on topics ranging from rapid maxillary expansion, growth, and development, biomechanics, and orthognathic surgery, to evolving technologies. Many of his works have become often cited classic contributions to the orthodontic literature. He was invited to be the first guest editor of *Seminars in Orthodontics* when it premiered in 1995, creating an issue appropriately devoted to biomechanics and appliance design. Bob lectured extensively throughout the United States and around the world. He was invited to speak at the annual session of the American Association of Orthodontists several times and was also a keynote speaker at the European Orthodontic Society's congress in Belgium in 2001. He served as scientific program chair of the American Association of Orthodontist's annual session held in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 2003. His research contributions, service endeavors, and teaching philosophies profoundly influenced the lives and practices of most of the

academic and clinical orthodontists in the United States and around the world.

As an orthodontic educator, Bob pioneered the movement incorporating key elements of the private practice model into graduate orthodontic education. Residents completed his programs at Minnesota, San Francisco, and Virginia Commonwealth knowing that they were fully prepared to treat the entire spectrum of orthodontic patients efficiently and effectively. By establishing an environment that was energetic with an atmosphere of mutual respect, residents quickly acquired a sense of responsibility, appropriate self-confidence, and awareness of their obligation to make treatment decisions based on the highest ethical and moral values. Bob's enthusiasm for understanding, analyzing, and implementing new concepts and techniques instilled in his students a motivation to pursue lifelong learning through continuing education and by reading the orthodontic literature. The 2009 Orthodontic Educational Leadership Conference held in conjunction with the American Association of Orthodontist's annual session in Boston was named in his honor.

Through his numerous service roles, Bob significantly influenced the course of development of our profession and specialty. He served as president of both the Northern California and North Atlantic components of the Edward H. Angle Society. In Virginia, Bob was the first orthodontist and first academic dentist appointed to the state's board of dentistry. At VCU, he headed the committee that rewrote the university-wide guidelines governing promotion and tenure policies. During his career, Bob served on the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation and was an examiner for the Northeastern Regional Board of Dental

Examiners. He was named Distinguished Practitioner in Dentistry in 1995 by the National Academies of Practice. In 2002, Bob was recognized by the American Association of Orthodontists for his distinguished contributions to the specialty, receiving the prestigious Albert H. Ketcham Memorial Award. He was also honored at the 2011 biennial meeting of the Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontists held in Charleston, South Carolina.

In his personal life, Bob was a devoted son, husband, and father. He married Delores Eller Isaacson on September 14, 1970. Bob and Delores worked as a team on many projects together, both cultivating their flower and vegetable gardens at home and working to make the orthodontic departments that he chaired into the most successful ventures possible. At their home, they often hosted festive gatherings for orthodontic residents and department faculty members to foster camaraderie and cohesion. During his time as editor of *The Angle Orthodontist* and afterward, as he continued working in the role of editor-in-chief emeritus through 2017, Delores worked with him behind the scenes, handling correspondence, organizing files, and formatting papers for publication. They traveled the world and life together, both literally and figuratively. His passing occurred one day after they celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary. Bob leaves behind his wife Delores; their 3 children, Cathy, Mary and Bob; and 7 grandchildren: Katy and Chris, Haydn and Regan, and Libby, Zachary, and Frank. He will be greatly missed but remembered fondly by his family, colleagues, former students, and orthodontists throughout the world.

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