

Thomas P. Habif, MD



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Dr Thomas (Tom) P. Habif passed away August 17, 2018, at the age of 75 years (Fig 1). His close relatives celebrate and remember him as a loving, quick-witted, and dedicated family man. His patients will remember him for his compassion and kindness and dermatologists around the world for his teaching through medical photography and publishing.

Dr Habif graduated from Tufts University School of Medicine in 1969. He completed a year in pathology and a dermatology residency at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock clinic in 1974. During 1971-1979, he served as a Major in the Air National Guard as a flight surgeon in charge of the National Guard Medical Clinic at Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He also founded a private dermatology practice with his coresident Dr Warren Pringle and cared for thousands of patients from the New Hampshire seacoast community over a 40-year period. Dr Habif was always generous with his time, and he continued to teach medical students and residents as a Clinical Professor of Surgery (dermatology section) at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth while in private practice.

Dr Habif developed a passion for medical photography and writing during his dermatology training. He was humble and never sought to be in the spotlight. Yet, his publishing projects tell the story of his impressive accomplishments. Dr Habif would often say “3 days a week, I practice medicine, and 4 days a week, I write books.” He embraced new technology and was digitizing his photos and sorting his written materials electronically long before the rest of us even wondered about the future of computers in medicine. He authored 6 editions of one of the most successful single-authored textbooks in the field of dermatology, *Clinical Dermatology: A Color Guide to Diagnosis and Therapy*. Dr Habif also served as editor for several editions of 2 other well-regarded dermatology books, *Skin Disease Diagnosis: Diagnosis and*



Fig 1. Dr Thomas Habif (*right*) and Dr Richard Baughman (*left*) circa 1990.

Treatment and Dermatology DDX Deck, a portable compilation of a thousand images designed for easy use in clinic. His efforts were recognized with awards from The American Medical Writers Association and The Association of American Publishers. His textbooks have been translated into 10 languages and continue to educate clinicians around the world.

Outside of medicine, Tom was an avid photographer, pilot, and outdoorsman. He meticulously documented what he saw each day. Tom photographed landscapes, wildlife, and historic New England towns with his latest high-resolution cameras. His medical office was decorated with many of these amazing photographs, and he was known to gift them to his friends and patients when they admired their beauty. Tom also loved aviation from his time with the military. Flying enabled him to capture images of the world from an unseen perspective. He owned a seaplane and would fly around Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire with his wife, Dorothy, and family and friends. Tom completed a bicycle race up New Hampshire’s 6000-foot high Mount Washington, and he traversed by dog sled the 1000-mile Alaska Iditarod Trail twice! He would fondly recall camping for days on his front lawn in the heart of the Maine winter to prepare for the brutal outdoor journey.

Dr Habif lived a full and vibrant life, leaving many wonderful memories to those who were fortunate enough to have known him. He embodied many of the noble traits that physicians aspire to: empathy and

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caring, curiosity and innovation, and honesty and kindness. For his family, friends, and patients, these traits will live on in their memories, and for his medical colleagues, his contributions will live on through the legacy of the images and words in his

textbooks. Dr Habib's textbooks are used around the world to help diagnose both common and rare skin conditions, and they will continue to help dermatology clinicians and patients for generations to come.