

John Alton Burdine, MD

John Alton Burdine, MD, a nuclear medicine physician, past president of SNM, and noted leader and organizer at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston (TX), died on April 12.

Dr. Burdine was born in Austin (TX) in 1936. His father was John A. Burdine, Sr., MD, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin. The young Burdine graduated from his father's institution in 1959. He received his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston in 1961. He completed an internship in internal medicine at the Indiana University Medical Center (Indianapolis) and returned to Galveston for residency in internal medicine. During his residency, he first became interested in nuclear medicine scanning techniques.

In 1965, Dr. Burdine moved to Houston, where he became a professor of radiology and professor of medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, while also serving as chief of the nuclear medicine sections at Baylor and for the Harris County Hospital District. At Baylor he published seminal works pancreatic, hepatic, renal, and lung radioisotope scanning in nationally recognized journals. He became chief of the nuclear medicine service at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital/Texas Children's Hospital in 1969, a position he held along with other responsibilities for the next 15 y. Among his team's accomplishments during these years was the introduction of ^{99m}Tc -human albumin microspheres for lung perfusion studies and other scanning applications.

From 1969 to 1984, Burdine helped to build the nuclear medicine department and laboratory at St. Luke's into one of the world's finest. In 1984, he was elected chief of staff at St. Luke's. Later that year, he accepted an offer to become chief executive officer and head administrator of St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital and the Texas Heart Institute. His title in this position changed: in 1987 to president and chief executive officer of St. Luke's, and in 1991 to vice chair and chief executive officer, a position he held until retirement in 1994.



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Dr. Burdine initiated development and quality programs that sustained St. Luke's through periods of expansion. He led the effort to construct the St. Luke's Medical Tower, later renamed the O'Quinn Medical Tower at St. Luke's, and the Skybridge, the 29-story, César Pelli-designed medical and professional building, with twin towers that remain a Houston landmark. His management also laid the groundwork for future successes at St. Luke's. "I would dare say that St. Luke's success was built upon John's shoulders," said Michael Jhin,

MD. "He was a bear of a man with a personality to match—warm, strong-willed, principled, wise. He was committed to the most important thing, the best possible care of patients." Colleagues remembered Burdine as not only a forward-thinking leader but as a compassionate physician. David Pate, MD, who was president of St. Luke's until 2009, told the *Houston chronicle*: "John had a passion for helping those who were less fortunate and often called me to ask me to care for people who had complicated medical problems and no way to pay.

In 1997, Dr. Burdine's accomplishments were recognized with the Hall of Honor Award from the College of Natural Sciences at The University of Texas at Austin. He served as chair of the Committee on Nuclear Medicine for the Texas Medical Association and became an active member in SNM, serving on numerous committees, as a member of the board of trustees, and as president in 1982 and 1983. He authored and coauthored more than 120 papers, abstracts, and chapters in medical textbooks pertaining primarily to nuclear medicine and became a fellow of the American College of Nuclear Physicians and a member of the American Board of Nuclear Medicine. Described by many as a true "Renaissance man," Burdine was a gourmet cook, wine connoisseur, orchid horticulturist, and avid hunter and angler. He is survived by his wife of more than 50 y, 2 sons and a daughter, and 5 grandchildren.