

## NUCLEAR PHYSICIANS MOURN LOSS OF TWO LEADERS

ON APRIL 14, THE NUCLEAR MEDICINE community was deeply saddened by the tragic death of two visionaries. John L. Kuranz, PhD, was a nuclear scientist and chairman of the board of Medi-Physics, Inc., Amersham Healthcare, and Robert B. Lytle, MS, was the vice president of marketing for Siemens Nuclear Medicine Group (see box below) when they died after their private plane collided with another plane when landing over a Wisconsin airport. "John and Bob were good friends, and they both were doing what they loved most—flying—when they exited the world," said Ben Armbruster, Siemens' manager of marketing service.

Of his most well-known accomplishments, Kuranz had the foresight to recognize the tremendous value of the Anger camera. In 1960, his company, Nuclear Chicago, acquired the patent rights to the Anger camera forging a new frontier in nuclear medicine. Thanks to Kuranz, there are over 20,000 Anger cameras in use worldwide diagnosing more than 20 million patients each year.

Friends and colleagues say Kuranz wore many

hats. He was an inventor, entrepreneur, physicist, pilot—and a gentleman. "John didn't wear his accomplishments on his sleeve. He was an unassuming man, although he was truly a giant in the world of engineering, physics and nuclear medicine," said William A. Ehmgig, the vice president of professional affairs at Amersham Corporation in Arlington Heights, IL.

Barely a teenager, Kuranz first earned a name for himself by creating an award-winning airplane that was powered by a rubberband and flew for over an hour. A few years later, he invented a smoother and more efficient fuel-metering device for a model airplane given to him by his father. The device was patented and went on to become the standard form of fuel dispensing and measurement for all small motors built before World War II. Years later, the money brought in from the patent would enable Kuranz to start up Nuclear Chicago.

While serving in the military in the early 1940s, Kuranz was assigned to the renowned Manhattan Project at the University of Chicago which resulted in the development of the atomic bomb. He witnessed the first explosion of an atomic device at White Sands, New Mexico. After the war, Kuranz founded Nuclear Chicago Corporation and followed through on his dream to use nuclear physics for medicinal purposes. Two decades later, he sold his mid-sized company to the larger Searle Pharmaceuticals. The camera portion of the business was later acquired by Siemens Gammasonics.

Kuranz was a leader in both the technical and commercial evolution of radioisotopic applications in nuclear medicine. He served as chairman of the U.S.A.E. Advisory Committee on Isotope Development and as a member of NASA's Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel. For several years, he was president of Amersham Corporation. At the time of his death, he was chairman of the board of Medi-physics, a director at Amersham, and a senior advisor for Siemens. In an introductory speech honoring Kuranz at the ACNP meeting this past February, Al Herbert, managing director of health care at Amersham, said, "In all his undertakings, John has been a bright star, shining not only for his achievements but also for his unwavering integrity. All of us who know him well, as well as those who have ever made his acquaintance, know that John Kuranz is truly a man of honor." Kuranz was 73 when he died and is survived by his wife, Georgia, 3 children and 10 grandchildren.



*John L. Kuranz, PhD*



*Robert B. Lytle, MS*

### Nuclear Medicine Marketing Giant

Robert B. Lytle, MS, was the vice president of marketing of Siemens Nuclear Medicine Group. He was 48 when he died and is survived by his wife, Novia, and two children, Robert and Nicole. He began his career in nuclear medicine in 1974 with G.D. Searle before he took a job with Siemens where he had been for 20 years. A year and a half ago, Lytle moved from Atlanta to the Chicago suburbs to lead the company's comeback strategy. Under his leadership, Siemens' market share rose 6 percent, and Lytle garnered sales performance awards for his efforts. "He had a unique understanding of the needs of our customers and made sure these needs were being translated into the actual product that we were building," said Ben Armbruster, Siemens' manager of marketing services.

Among his accomplishments, Lytle was proud of his earning the rank of Eagle Scout and was an avid photographer and pilot. He served on the corporate committee of the American College of Nuclear Physicians. He was also a member of the board of directors of CTI PET systems in Knoxville and was admired and respected by his colleagues. "Bob was a perfectionist who taught others how to live up to his expectations and exceed their own abilities," said Armbruster.