



Hirsch Handmaker

JUL 2, 1940 - MAR 9, 2026



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Dr. Hirsch Handmaker, a devoted physician, lifelong learner, and beloved father and grandfather, passed away surrounded by the enduring love of his family. His life was defined by intellectual curiosity, compassion for others, and deep devotion to the people he loved.

Born July 2, 1940, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Hirsch was the son of I.H. "Murf" Handmaker and Mae Bloom Handmaker. During his childhood, the family moved to Tucson, Arizona, where he spent his formative years. Though his early life included serious health challenges, he met them with resilience, humor, and determination—qualities that would guide him throughout his life. Hirsch was deeply influenced by his mother, Mae, an intelligent and compassionate woman devoted to helping others, and by the steady encouragement of his father, whose advice stayed with him always: whatever path he chose, he should "be a good one." Hirsch took those words to heart.

From an early age, he aspired to a career in medicine. He earned a degree in Biological Science from the University of Arizona and received his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Southern California. His training in Chicago led him to a distinguished career in radiology and nuclear medicine.

Medicine for Hirsch was not simply a profession—it was a calling. He devoted decades to the care of patients, particularly children, and became a respected leader in pediatric nuclear medicine. Over the course of his career he published widely, helped advance new imaging technologies, and later brought his creativity and energy to several entrepreneurial ventures in medical imaging and health care innovation. His remarkable mind was matched by a genuine desire to help others. He also served his country with honor during the Vietnam War, working as a radiologist at the 27th Surgical Hospital in Chu Lai. He received the Bronze Star for his service, an experience that further deepened his compassion and sense of responsibility toward others.

For all his professional accomplishments, Hirsch's greatest pride and joy was his family. He shared a deep and enduring bond with Dianne Handmaker, his former wife and lifelong best friend.



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Their partnership shaped many of the happiest chapters of his life.

He was a devoted father to his daughter, Sally, whom he adored from the moment she was born. He warmly welcomed her husband, Frank, into the family and took immense pride in the life they built together. Nothing delighted him more than being a grandfather to Grace and Jack. He loved them with great tenderness and pride, and the naming of his granddaughter Grace in honor of his beloved sister made that bond especially meaningful.

Hirsch possessed an extraordinary mind and a generous heart. He was endlessly curious about the world—drawn to science, music, politics, and spirited conversation with equal enthusiasm. A lifelong sports enthusiast, he maintained a deep loyalty to the University of Arizona, his alma mater, and remained a proud and devoted fan of USC football. Baseball, in particular, was a passion since childhood, when he traveled to ballparks with his father, and a love of the game and its history stayed with him throughout his life. He enjoyed a long connection with the Oakland A's organization, working with team physicians and trainers in support of player care.

He lived fully, loved deeply, and leaves behind a legacy carried forward by the family he cherished and the many lives he touched.

Loving parent of: Sally Guido (Frank)

Cherished grandparent of: Grace Guido and Jack Guido

Dear sibling of: Sara Block

Also survived by: Dianne Handmaker, and many beloved nieces, nephews, cousins, and close friends.

A private service will be held for family and close friends. Temple Anshei Israel in Tucson, AZ can provide information about a virtual service upon request at the family's discretion.



Tribute Wall

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Kennedy Sparling posted:

Dr. Handmaker was an incredible physician, mentor, and human being. He was always deeply supportive and devoted so much of his time and mental energy to helping students pursue their goals. We were recently working together on an event to advocate for concussion awareness and domestic violence within the healthcare community. He thoughtfully considered every detail with me, served as a sounding board for ideas, and genuinely wanted me to succeed. He was a truly caring individual who taught me so much, and he will be greatly missed.

April 24 at 4:26 PM



Dani Bregman posted:

Hirsch was a beautiful soul. When Emelia was concussed while participating in color guard, he was her biggest advocate and guided me on how best to care for her. We enjoyed having him stay with us these last few years during the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. He loved sharing stories of his youth and sharing about Sally and the kids. He will be missed!

March 12 at 3:14 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Hirsch by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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