ROBERT A. CHASE, M.D

Robert Arthur Chase passed away on September 9, 2024 at the age of 101. He died peacefully in his home with his three children present.

Dr. Bob Chase was born in Keene, New Hampshire on January 6, 1923 to Albert H. and Georgia B. Chase. He attended primary grades through high school in Keene and in 1942 enrolled at the University of New Hampshire.

Bob enlisted in the Navy and his college years were interrupted by active duty assignments. At war's end, he returned to the University of New Hampshire and received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1945. He married his high school sweetheart, Ann Crosby Parker, in 1946 shortly after her graduation from the University of New Hampshire.

He applied to the Yale Medical School and completed his M.D. degree in 1947. His interest in surgery led him to join Yale's surgical training program as an intern in 1947. In 1949, while still in the midst of his surgical education, Chase enlisted as an officer in the U.S. Army.

Bob was called to active duty after three years of surgical training and was assigned to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey as the Chief of Surgery. One year later, Captain Chase was assigned to Valley Forge Army Hospital as the Chief of Hand Surgery. In 1953 Chase returned to Yale to complete his surgical residency and was soon assigned to the U.S. Army Hospital in Leghorn, Italy as the Chief of Surgery. He would describe these years in Italy with Ann and their three children, Debbie, Nancy, and Rob, as nearly idyllic.

After seven years in the army, Dr. Chase was invited to join the surgical faculty at Yale in 1957 to establish a plastic surgery division. He spent two years in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to gain additional experience in plastic surgery. In 1959 he was appointed Assistant Professor at Yale and in 1962 was promoted to Associate Professor. He established Yale's first plastic surgery unit and met Dr. Paul Brand who convinced him to travel to Vellore, India, to perform surgical procedures on leprosy patients. He spent three months at the Christian Medical College there and worked repairing paralyzed hands for many leprosy patients.

In 1963 Dr. Chase was recruited to Stanford University as the Chair of the Department of Surgery where he established Stanford's Plastic Surgery Residency program.

In 1966 Dr. Chase and Dr. Donald Laub performed cleft lip and palate surgery on a teenager from Mexico who came to Stanford for the procedure. They went on to establish Interplast (now renamed ReSurge International) one of the nation's first volunteer-run, non-governmental international plastic surgery organizations. Today, almost 60 years after the first surgery, ReSurge has provided surgical care to thousands of patients in Central and South America, Asia, India, and Africa.

In 1974 Dr. Chase took a leave of absence from Stanford, and he and Ann moved to Philadelphia, where he became the President and Director of the National Board of Medical Examiners.

He returned to clinical and academic duties at Stanford in 1977 to direct the Human Anatomy Program until 1992. During this period he established Stanford's first hand surgery unit within the Division of Plastic Surgery and subsequently established the first Interdisciplinary Division of Hand

Surgery in 1985. Dr. Chase became the Emile Holman Emeritus Professor in 1988, remaining active in teaching Human Anatomy.

Dr. Chase's list of honors and awards is varied and extensive and includes lectureships, visiting professorships, and membership in 40 professional societies including the American Society for Surgery of the Hand (President 1983) and the American Association of Clinical Anatomists (President 1987). The libraries for the American Society for Surgery of the Hand and the Stanford Division of Plastic Surgery are both named in his honor. The Division of Hand Surgery, started by Dr. Chase in 1985, is now named the Robert A. Chase Center for Upper Limb Surgery.

For more than 45 years, Bob and Ann would return every summer to their Woodbine Farm in Jaffrey Center, New Hampshire, near their birthplace in Keene. There Bob would spend days woodworking in the barn's well-appointed woodshop, driving the tractor to mow the fields, and entertaining family and friends. In 2010 Ann and Bob moved permanently to Woodbine Farm and their retirement community in Peterborough. Following Ann's death in 2013, Bob returned to California to be near his 3 children, 9 grandchildren, and 17 great grandchildren.

Burial will be private in Jaffrey Center.