John M. Templeton Jr., philanthropist, dies at 75

by Cathy Lynn Grossman in the June 24, 2015 issue

John M. Templeton Jr., 75, president and chairman of the Templeton Foundation, died May 16 at his home in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

The cause of death was cancer, according to his daughter, Heather Templeton Dill, who has been the foundation's acting president during her father's illness.

Known as "Jack," Templeton was a pediatric surgeon. He retired as director of the trauma program at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in 1995 to work for the foundation. He became chairman after his father's death in 2008.

John Templeton Sr. created the Templeton Foundation in 1987 with the fortune he built as the founder of the Templeton Fund investments in 1954. The foundation provides support for science and medical research and for related research on the "big questions" of human purpose. The senior Templeton's often-expressed goal was to "reconcile the worlds of science and religion."

Critics alleged that the foundation's funding led grant-hungry scientists away from pure research to investigating the impact of spirituality and religion. Supporters, in turn, said the foundation did not steer their research or change findings. For example, the foundation publicly reported that a study it funded to investigate the value of people praying for strangers' health showed that such prayer failed to help patients and may even have had a bad effect on people who were aware of the prayers.

According to a foundation statement, Templeton Jr. was born in New York City. He received a B.A. in history from Yale University in 1962 and a medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 1968. He began his medical training in pediatric surgery at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in 1973 and returned there in 1977 after serving as a physician in the navy for two years. He and his wife, Josephine, a pediatric anesthesiologist, developed a specialty in treating conjoined twins.

John Schott, a medical school classmate and former trustee of the foundation, said: "Jack's seeking nature, his interest in purpose, his grappling with the big

questions—all made him a superb doctor and made him the best possible head of the foundation.”

Templeton, an evangelical Christian, was a member of Mitt Romney’s National Faith and Values Steering Committee during the 2008 campaign. Templeton’s honors included the 2006 Canterbury Medal from the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.
—Religion News Service

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