JAMES PHILLIPS

During an unprecedented 48 years of service to the Department of Surgery and Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Mr. James Phillips enhanced careers and touched the lives of many people. He was and is the consummate professional, handling preoperative care, anesthesia, intraoperative care, guiding the actual operation and providing post-operative care. He is responsible for many successful experiments performed by almost every surgical investigator who came through Vanderbilt for five decades.

As a research technician, and later the coordinator of the S.R. Light Laboratory Surgical Facilities, James provided surgical instruction to thousands of medical students. It’s safe to say that, at one point, more than half the surgeons in Nashville had worked directly with James. In addition, every surgical resident that went through a research fellowship from 1947-1995 was the fortunate beneficiary of his wisdom and experience.

He also took an active role in experimental research projects, providing technical guidance to many young and older surgical investigators, technicians and research assistants at Vanderbilt and from universities around the world. James is a highly-trained experimental surgeon who guided generations of scientific investigators, researchers and educators. Throughout his tenure, possessing an innate ability and desire to teach others, he always sought to improve upon existing surgical methodologies or develop new surgical methods and techniques. James also played an integral role in the growth of the Department of Surgery’s research programs. He was on staff and deeply involved during an important milestone here at Vanderbilt, when Dr. S.R. Light committed the resources necessary to construct the Surgical Research Facility that remains in use today.

Constructed in 1955, the S.R. Light Surgical Laboratory continues to serve as the central core facility for research programs not only in the Section of Surgical Sciences but across all scientific disciplines in the University, and James was here during the construction of this facility, helping guide its creation.