



City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
February 14, 2023

ITEM TITLE:

Recognizing the life of Dr. Jim Charles Hirschman former Coral Gables Fire Department Medical Director.

BRIEF HISTORY:

Dr. Jim Charles Hirschman passed away on December 20, 2022. Dr. Hirschman was the personification of a true Midwesterner; hardworking, conscientious, trustworthy, and genuinely friendly. He completed his undergraduate studies in Chemistry at Harvard University in three years, graduating in 1952 and went on to medical school at Indiana University, School of Medicine, from which he graduated with honors in 1955. He completed his internship in the Navy; serving an additional two years as a Navy doctor.

In 1966, Dr. Hirschman developed a system of overseas transmission of the human electrocardiogram by radio. This led to his involvement in the development of the first pre-hospital medical care system, now known as the 911-paramedic system that started in 1968 in Miami, Florida. At this time, he wrote the first version of the Florida Statue, FS 401, to provide statutory basis for EMTs and Paramedics to perform their medical interventions and wrote a teaching curriculum on anatomy, physiology and cardiology that was used to train the first EMTs and Paramedics in the United States. In 1972, he traveled to Israel to share the expertise of pre-hospital systems with the Israeli Red Cross.

As a voluntary faculty member of the University of Miami Medical School, he was promoted to the rank of Clinical Professor of Medicine; simultaneously running a private practice from 1961 to 2003 in Internal Medicine and Cardiology. During this time, Doc Jim also established the pre-hospital fire-rescue system in his home city of Coral Gables, Florida where he remained as the Medical Director for the next 36 years.