



*INFLUENTIAL  
PEOPLE AND  
IDEAS*



## A MEDICAL CALLING REDIRECTED

ARTHUR D. COLLINS JR., WG'73

IT'S TOUGH TO picture Medtronic CEO and Chairman Arthur Collins Jr. as anything other than a poised professional. But get him talking, and you'll glimpse the young boy who followed his doctor dad on medical rounds.

Today, Collins brings the same excitement with him when he meets patients helped by Medtronic's medical devices.

When it came to choosing a career path, however, Arthur Collins Sr. — himself a Penn grad — had a piece of advice for his son: "If you don't have an undeniable calling to be a physician, don't do it." Bitten instead by the business bug, Collins combined his childhood awe of healing with leadership skills nurtured in the U.S. Navy and the Wharton MBA program. After consulting at Booz Allen Hamilton and working for Abbott Laboratories, he joined Medtronic, in 1992. Early in 2001, Collins became CEO, and a year later was elected chairman of the board.

Minneapolis-based Medtronic is the world's largest medical device company, with revenues annualizing at more than \$12 billion. Medtronic is best known for its pacemakers and implantable defibrillators, but also makes products to battle a range of cardiac and cardiovascular problems. The firm has also branched into treating neurological and spinal disorders, diabetes, and urological and gastrointestinal problems. Medtronic



## HE MADE AIRLINES FLY HIGHER

ROBERT L. CRANDALL, WG'60

A GREAT DEAL of what has been done right by the troubled airline industry is due to the will of Robert Crandall. During his tenure at American Airlines from 1980 to 1998, which includes stints as president and chairman, **he started the modern frequent flyer program, began the hub and spoke system to keep people flying from small cities to major ones on a simplified schedule, and began code-sharing with domestic and important foreign airlines.**

Sometimes, Crandall went back and forth with such innovations, as when he put in many tiers of fares at American, then changed to simplified fares, then went back to the more complex system. Even this was a response to technological innovation. He had his analysts figure out, with mathematical matrices, which kinds of travelers flew at what times, on which routes, and with what advanced planning. His goal, he said, was to fill every seat in a plane, not just have the most simplified system. The result? Sabre, the modern reservations system.

Crandall is notably blunt, even brusque. U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney was CEO of Halliburton when *USA Today* asked him to comment on Crandall's legacy upon retirement.

"His greatest asset: He tells you exactly what he thinks," said Cheney. "In the corporate world and politics, most people are reluctant to do that. They don't want to offend anyone or hurt their position. But it's vital to work with people like Bob."

Even his union rivals praise Crandall as a tough adversary in negotiations but an unstinting ally in improving the industry. Denise Hedges, the president of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants told *USA Today*, "Crandall's brilliant, creative financial and marketing skills are something a manager can learn from."

reports that every five seconds, a Medtronic product is used to save or substantially improve a life.

"My hope for the future is that we'll accelerate the use of advanced medical technology to provide even better medical solutions," Collins says. To that end, he often "scrubs in" with surgeons using Medtronic products and walks the R&D labs and manufacturing facilities.

Lauded as an innovative leader for Medtronic and as chairman of the Advanced

**"My hope for the future is that we'll accelerate the use of advanced medical technology to provide even better medical solutions."**

Medical Technology Association, Collins was appointed by the U.S. Commerce Secretary to the Measuring Innovation in the 21st Century Economy Advisory Committee in 2006. He's now charged with understanding and measuring how U.S. innovation contributes to American economic growth and productivity.

Collins is also a Wharton Overseer.