

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Blair Filler, MD. - 2023

Dr. Filler was born in Salem, Ohio on October 25, 1927. He grew up in Ohio and attended Bowling Green State University from 1946 to 1948 before enrolling at the University of Michigan Medical School. He began his post-graduate career as an Intern at the Los Angeles County Hospital. Then he completed his Residency in Orthopaedic Surgery in 1961 in Boston, where his training was at the New England Deaconess Hospital, the Veteran's Hospital, and the Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Filler then moved back to Southern California and started his orthopaedic practice in Inglewood. From 1961 to 1973, he was part of the Centinela Medical Group.



Dr. Filler began his academic career as Assistant Director of Hand Surgery with the University of Southern California in 1962, and eventually became Clinical Professor. He also served as the Director of Resident Education at the UCLA / Orthopaedic Hospital in Santa Monica and at the Charles Drew-Martin Luther King Medical Center. He was affiliated with the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, as well. Throughout his career, he was an enthusiastic educator and outstanding role model for young orthopaedists, while tirelessly providing much needed care for patients in underserved areas of Los Angeles.

Dr. Blair Filler served on the Board of Directors for the Los Angeles Chapter of the WOA, becoming President of the Chapter in 1966. He led and served on many local community organizations including the Los Angeles Disaster Committee, the Olympic Village Health Services Committee, the Southern California Hand Society, and the California Medical Association. He was a long-time leader of the California Orthopaedic Association and served as President of COA in 1989 and continued as their Chair of their Continuing Medical Education Program Committee for many years. He also served as Chair, of COA's Political Action Committee (OPAC). Dr. Filler and his wife, Dodie, never missed an opportunity to travel to Washington DC to lobby members of Congress and Administrative agencies. It was often said and always true that Dr. Filler never joined an organization that he did not improve tremendously.

Dr. Filler began his long commitment and service to the AAOS in 1970, serving on multiple committees including the finance, real estate, steering, and resource committees. He was Secretary of the Academy in 1977. He served as Treasurer in 1981 and also served on many task force groups, including the Clinical Guidelines, Disability, Health Policy and Internet Development Task Forces. Dr. Filler had a powerful role on the Council on Advocacy, where he championed many key issues on behalf of Orthopaedists and their patients on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. He helped create a strong foundation for the critically important lobbying efforts the AAOS still does. He also led the Committee on Coding and Reimbursement and led the effort to teach ethical coding to orthopaedists. In 2009, Dr. Filler was awarded the William Tipton Award for his many years of commitment and loyal service to the AAOS.

Dr. Filler was a lifelong and ardent supporter of the Western Orthopaedic Association. From 1970-1978, he served on committees for registration, by-laws, nominations, and planning and development. He served as Treasurer/Historian in 2000, and as President of the WOA in 2003. During his Presidency, Dr. Filler further elevated the WOA to prominence by re-organizing key components of its leadership, governance, and oversight. As thanks for his years of service to the organization, Dr. Filler received the first WOA Lifetime Achievement Award, presented in 2016. That award now bears Dr. Filler's name, and it is awarded intermittently to worthy recipients who embody the spirit and enthusiasm for the WOA that Blair demonstrated for so long.

Dr. Filler's illustrious career, outstanding leadership, and refreshing humility have left a legacy that will endure long into the future. He will be missed. His spirit shall live on forever in all who were fortunate enough to have known him.