

# Theodore Kurze

[Theodore Kurze](#) was the first to use the [operating microscope](#) in the discipline of neurosurgery. In 1957 he used the device to remove a [vestibular schwannoma](#) in a 5-year-old patient in [Los Angeles](#). The procedure was a success, but Kurze grappled with the draping technique. He tried several materials and techniques including turkey bags with elastics to fit the microscope handles—an attempt that produced immense heat and smoke in one case

He continued his refinements and worked to establish the world's first cranial base microsurgical laboratory. His work with the microscope introduced many neurosurgeons to the vast possibilities of such a tool. As Kurze proceeded with his work, an industrious and insightful neurosurgeon began his own observations and practical utilization of the operating microscope on the opposite coast:

[Raymond Madiford Peardon Donaghy](#)

Dr. Theodore Kurze, a pioneering neurosurgeon who radically altered the practice of neurosurgery with his introduction of the microscope to brain surgery, has died. He was 79.

Kurze died May 10 2002 at his home in Newport Beach. He had been battling prostate cancer.

"To do brain surgery before the microscope ... you had to be able to accept the fact that people didn't do well, that you were hurting and maiming people by trying to help them," said longtime colleague Dr. Peter J. Jannetta, professor of neurosurgery at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh. Surgeons in those days could ill afford to become too friendly with their patients, said Jannetta.

Then, in 1957, Kurze—who was in private practice in Los Angeles—and his colleague Dr. Robert Rand of UCLA introduced the microscope to better visualize the neural tissues they were working with.

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