

## The Story of Michael and Mark Bennett



Michael Bennett and his father Mark Bennett were an exceptionally close father and son. Mark was a decorated WWII combat veteran, former actor and stockbroker, who lived near his family in Baltimore. He spent years enjoying the company of his son and five grandchildren, but in February of 2004 the robustly viable senior developed a flu virus.

Worried that the flu was developing into pneumonia, Michael took his father to the hospital, where he showed immediate improvement – they expected a short hospital stay. But unknown to father or son, within a few days Mark had contracted several antibiotic-resistant infections while at the hospital - including MRSA and VRE. After more than three weeks in the hospital, Mark, still in serious danger from his infections, developed a raging infection in his leg from yet another antibiotic-resistant hospital bug. Mark was rushed to Shock Trauma where he underwent emergency surgery to amputate his leg, which had been completely destroyed by the bacteria. Because he was remarkably strong and vital, Mark survived the surgery, and Michael and his family prayed for his recovery as he was moved to several different rehabilitation facilities.

Tragically, the terrible problem of hospital-acquired infections struck the Bennett family again as Mark was passed three additional strains of resistant pathogens. After battling at least 6 strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, over a 4 month period, on June 13, 2004 Mark Bennett died. Michael, driven by the fact that his father's illness and horrific suffering were preventable, vowed to do something about it.

Leading the Coalition for Patients' Rights in Maryland, Michael is pushing for statewide legislation requiring implementation of the Society of Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) guidelines to control antibiotic resistant "superbugs" in health care institutions. Michael Bennett continues his work today in memory of his father, to get effective infection control practices in place that will save lives.