

Benjamin Solomon Carson

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben_Carson

(born September 18, 1951) is a noted American neurosurgeon. He became the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital when he was 33 years old.

Background

Carson was born in inner city Detroit, Michigan,^[1] and has one younger brother Curtis. His mother Sonya Carson had high expectations for her sons despite her third grade education and the fact she married at the age of thirteen. Benjamin's parents divorced when he was eight years old.

Sonya was determined to turn around her sons' lives. She limited their television viewing and only let them play outside when all of their school work was done. She also made them read two books a week and then write book reports on what they had read, even though she couldn't understand most of it due to her poor education.

One day when Carson's teacher brought in a sample rock, Benjamin recognized it and amazed his classmates, causing them to realize that he wasn't as dumb as they once believed. In a year's time he was the star pupil of his class. With his newfound thirst for knowledge he studied hard in all subjects. Carson later developed an interest in psychology, and he graduated from high school with honors.

Carson then attended Yale University where he earned a degree in Psychology. From there he went to the University of Michigan Medical School. There, his interest shifted from psychology to neurosurgery, and after medical school he went to work at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. At age 33, he became the hospital's Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery.

In 1987, Carson made medical history with an operation to separate a pair of Siamese twins. The Binder twins were joined at the back of the head. Previous operations had failed, kill both twins or only saving one. After 22 hours of surgery with a staff of seventy on hand, Carson's operation was successful.

In 1997, he traveled to South Africa where he led a 50-member team in the successful separation of 11-month-old Zambian twin boys, Joseph and Luka Banda, joined at the head. The twins did not share any organs but did share intricate blood vessels which flowed into each child's brain. According to Carson, he had performed surgical rehearsals with a computerized, 3-D virtual workbench that allowed him to visualize artificial reconstructions of the twins' brains. The operation lasted 22 hours before successfully concluding.

In June 2002, Carson was diagnosed with a highly aggressive form of prostate cancer. Six weeks later he underwent successful surgery to remove the cancer. He took an active role in the medical and recovery process, asking his medical team questions and examining his own X-rays and scans. Since the surgery there have been no complications, and he did not need to undergo chemotherapy or other radiation treatment.

In 2003, Carson was a member of the surgical team which worked to separate conjoined siblings Ladan and Laleh Bijani. When they asked why he had performed such a risky surgery, he said that he had heard them say that they would rather die than stay conjoined.

Carson has received numerous honors and awards including more than 40 honorary doctorate degrees. He is a member of the American Academy of Achievement, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, and many other prestigious organizations. He sits on many boards including the Board of Directors of Kellogg Company, Costco Wholesale Corporation, Yale Corporation (the governing body of Yale University), and America's Promise. He is also the president and co-founder of the Carson Scholars Fund, which recognizes young people of all backgrounds for exceptional academic and humanitarian accomplishments. Carson did a cameo in the 2003 movie *Stuck on You* (starring Matt Damon and Greg Kinnear) where he dons a surgeon mask to separate the conjoined twins.

Carson was appointed to the President's Council on Bioethics by George W. Bush in 2004.

In addition to being a surgeon, Carson is also a writer who has authored three bestsellers: *Gifted Hands*, *The Big Picture*, and *Think Big*. The first book is an autobiography, and the latter two are about his personal philosophies of success that incorporate hard work and a faith in God. Ben Carson is a Seventh-day Adventist, and an outspoken Christian.

Carson has been married to Candy Carson for twenty-five years and has three sons. He also has a middle school named after him, Benjamin S. Carson Honors Preparatory Middle School.

For the 2006 PBS program *African American Lives*, Carson, along with other notable African Americans such as Oprah Winfrey and comedian Chris Tucker, had his DNA tested to discover his original African ancestry. The genetic test determined that some of his ancestors originated from the Lunda ethnic group, who are currently located in Angola, Congo, and Zambia.

Dr. Carson has also had success with Trigeminal neuralgia. Using Radio frequency and Glycerine Rhizotomy he has saved many lives from this painful disease noted as "the suicide disease" due to the level of pain.