Dr. John Hansbrough was born in Virginia, graduated from the University of Wisconsin with Honors in Chemistry and attended Harvard Medical School where he graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1972. During this time, he began his career in basic science and his M.D. thesis involved the isolation and purification of RNA from lymphoid tissue. He subsequently completed his internship and general surgery residency at the University of Colorado and then joined its faculty at University of Colorado where he quickly rose to Associate Professor of Surgery while directing the Surgical Intensive Care Unit, the Emergency Department, and the Burn Unit. During this time, he continued his fundamental interest in basic research and was recruited to UCSD in 1984 as Director of the UCSD Burn Center. For 17 years, he single-handedly developed the UCSD Burn Unit into an internationally recognized center that not only emphasized excellence in care but opened the frontier for describing the immunosuppressive effects of injury, and the challenge of developing wound coverage using artificial skin. Dr. Hansbrough was instrumental in developing alternative skin substitutes and, after years of collaboration with both NIH, basic scientists, and industry, he was singularly responsible for the development of Dermograft-TC which has become a standard tissue coverage. Dr. Hansbrough was instrumental in developing alternative skin substitutes and, after years of collaboration with both NIH, basic scientists, and industry, he was singularly responsible for the development of Dermograft-TC which has become a standard tissue coverage. During his career, he had continuous extramural funding, served on the editorial board of every major journal related to injury care and participated in visiting professorships throughout the world. Dr. Hansbrough's commitment to research was classical. He took clinical problems for which he was directly responsible and aggressively pursued solutions which led to real changes in care. He was truly a renaissance surgeon. His interests were not limited to clinical care and biology. He was deeply interested in ongoing education and the rehabilitation of the injured patient. During the course of his career, he developed resources including a burn camp for injured children and was awarded the Chancellor’s Associate Award for Community Service at UCSD. In addition, he was visionary in developing a video-based learning center which focused on teaching patients the difficulties of dealing with burn injury and was intimately involved in training residents and peers in the fundamentals of burn care. As a tribute to his efforts, a CD demonstrating the fundamentals of burn care was distributed to all physicians caring for soldiers placed in harm's way during the Iraq Gulf War conflict of the 1990s. John was quiet, but an internally passionate physician. His commitment to his family was the focus of his life. His dedication to the care of the injured patient was amplified because of this. Dr. Hansbrough’s untimely death left a huge void in the Department of Surgery, throughout UCSD, and in the San Diego community. His loss extended internationally and was recognized by a special award from the American Burn Association. He was in line to become president. John gave of himself much more than he received. He saw this as his responsibility to medicine and to the injured patient. Perhaps this alone is his legacy. Dr. Hansbrough was one of the truly great surgeons of his time.
Dr. Kagan obtained his Bachelor of Arts from Case Western Reserve University in 1970 and his M.D. degree from St. Louis University in 1974. Dr. Kagan completed his training in general surgery at the University of Illinois Hospitals before joining the faculty as a staff surgeon in the Cook County Hospital Burn Unit in 1979. He was recruited to the Shriners Hospitals for Children and the University of Cincinnati in 1988 where he rose to become a Professor Surgery in 2003. He was the director of the University Hospital's Adult Burn Center from 1988 to 2008 and was named Assistant Chief of Staff of the Shriners Hospitals in 2000, later becoming its Chief of Staff in 2004. Dr. Kagan retired from clinical practice in 2015. Dr. Kagan's interests are in acute and reconstructive burn care, tissue banking, skin substitutes, burn center reimbursement, and acute & chronic wound care. He has authored over 190 abstracts, 120 original peer-reviewed publications, and 19 book chapters on burn injuries and tissue banking. During his career, Dr. Kagan served as president of the American Burn Association and the American Association of Tissue Banks.