



## **Joseph A. Murphy, MD, JD**

**IN MEMORIAM**

**1926 - 2001**



JOSEPH A. MURPHY was one of only a handful of doctor/lawyers in the country. He began his career as a general practitioner, and continued to practice medicine after starting a law practice.

Joe died of pulmonary fibrosis in Sacramento on April 5.

He was born 75 years earlier, on April 5, 1926, in Cambridge, MA, to an Irish-immigrant mother and a working-class father. After graduating from high school in Cambridge, he was the only boy from the community to make it to the local college - which happened to be Harvard University.

He graduated from Harvard in 1948, and in the early 1950s worked on research into atherosclerosis at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in the Bay Area. He then attended St. Louis University Medical School, receiving his medical degree in 1957.

Joe started his medical practice in Sacramento in 1962, but more academic studies were ahead. He attended McGeorge School of Law, graduating in 1974. Thereafter, he was active in both the medical and legal professions.

That same year, 1974, he did volunteer work at a Vietnamese refugee camp in Weimar. He found a young man interested in the priesthood and helped him get set up for the seminary.

That individual is now Father Joe Huong, a priest in the Sacramento diocese. (Years later, Joe went to Vietnam to help secure the release of Father Huong's parents and bring them to America.)

Joe went to Cambodia in 1975 on a medical mercy mission, and got out as Phnom Penh was falling to the communist forces; the trip was featured in several newspaper articles and a Public Broadcasting System documentary. After Glasnost, he traveled to Moscow to see about doing volunteer medical work there.

In the 1960s, 70s and 80s, he was the ringside doctor for Big Time Wrestling on Channel 40 and at the Memorial Auditorium; he was also ringside physician for the World Wrestling Federation for matches at Arco Arena.

In 1978 and 1980, he ran for Congress, unsuccessfully, on the Republican ticket for the seat held by Robert T. Matsui. In the summer of 2000, he had his own medical/legal radio talk show, broadcast in Arizona and Rhode Island.

"He was a man of great faith; he truly loved his Lord and his country," said his close friend, Mary Johnson. "No matter how ill he really did feel, he would always have a smile, a kind word and an uplifting conversation..."

"In every way, Joe truly was a healer. He had a genuine tender healing hand that in both life and death still heals those who knew him."

He is survived by five children - Joseph Murphy of Portland, OR; Kelly Mantsch of Fair Oaks; Regina Crawford of International Falls, MN; Mary Robertshaw of Orangevale; and Erik Murphy of Sacramento - and 11 grandchildren. He is also survived by two brothers and two sisters on the East Coast.

- by William Dugdale, MD

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