



## John Stroud, MD

### IN MEMORIAM

1921 - 2002



John and Robin Stroud were our next door neighbors on Quonset Row through our three years at the all-psychiatric Veterans Hospital at Palo Alto. For those too young to know, Quonset huts were the halved tin cans that provided housing after World War II. We had our first-born children there, his Sally and our Nanci. Big John had challenged my pregnant Anne in a franfurterfest and, of course, won. He celebrated by crunching a beer can in one hand. He could do both: challenge Anne and crush cans.

John was a Republican with deep misgivings about Republican Governor Earl Warren's social and health care ideals; I, a Democrat, with high regard for those ideals. John believed mental patients needed aggressive treatment in a protective setting; those with "good protoplasm" could be cajoled into accepting his paternalism while others needed a stricter regimen. I believed in a more fraternal "alliance for health."

When we commuted together to training assignments or professional meetings, he squeezed his enormous frame into my tiny British Austin, and spoke of his love of rich and harmonic choral music and his hours of pleasure from his shortwave and ham radios.

After our residency, John returned to the Navy while I switched from Army to Air Force for our Korean War tours.

Our paths crossed again a dozen years later, when I was selling the California Medical Association and the State of California an idea for state-subsidized, community-operated, mental health programs for voluntary patients. Meanwhile, John had persuaded Sutter Community Hospitals to include a locked and an open psychiatric unit in its new Memorial Hospital. John, who was on the CMA Mental Health Committee, saw the benefits of the program I was selling. When the state program became law, and I came to Sacramento to administer it, John helped me find office space for my clinical practice.

We still differed about politics, paternalism, and shock treatment, but shared an office suite and our interest in each other's interests. His stories about duck hunting were truly amusing, but never convinced me that the actual experience would live up to his tales.

John was easy to listen to. His voice came from his enormous chest, but could be soft, yet firm. He opened and directed Sutter Memorial's psychiatric inpatient unit for adults and talked me up to assume the children's outpatient unit and the Diagnostic and Treatment Center. We worked together for the next 15 years.

He was a member of our county medical society for 35 years, until his health forced him to retire. His practice had always been demanding. He often had a dozen or more patients in the hospital at one time; many dangerous to themselves, and sometimes to him. He was always on call for them. When he could no longer do that, he quit. He retired and became a full-time radio ham, until he could no longer do that.

This big growling bear served his patients, his professional community, and his family

with unstinting devotion.

— By Ed Rudin, MD

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