



IN MEMORIAM



William W. Ballou, MD, 1915-2005

WILLIAM WAYNE BALLOU, MD, died on December 11 after many years of general practice in Sacramento. Born on April 15, 1915, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, he received his medical doctor degree from the University of Indiana in 1940. After an internship, he practiced in several areas including Kodiak, Alaska, where he cared for military construction workers.

He came to Sacramento for residency training at the Sacramento County Hospital in 1944. Previously unfit for military service because of a hearing loss, he was nonetheless drafted after standards were relaxed. He served in the US Army from May 1944 to November 1945, mostly at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, returning to Sacramento where he remained the rest of his life.

During his residency, he met Carmen Russell and they were soon married. He loved his family and after each day's medical work was done he devoted all remaining time to them. He and Carmen reared seven children. At the time of his death, there were seventeen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

In 1946, he interviewed a retiring physician in North Sacramento who told Bill he could have the entire practice for \$250 and a cow. Bill had \$250 but no cow; the sale was made, no cows involved.

Bill recalled the doctor put on his hat and coat and walked out, never to return, leaving Bill with an active practice including seven patients in the waiting room!

He practiced in North Sacramento until 1975, thereafter in Carmichael, until he retired in 1982.

He loved caring for alcoholics and was perhaps the first physician in our area to attempt treating alcoholism as a medical problem. He was known to give much time and empathy. The first Sacramento detoxification center opened with Bill as the medical director. This facility replaced the "drunk tank" with compassion and hope for the "public inebriate" and others. He worked with several other inpatient and outpatient treatment programs.

In 1963, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Community Welfare Council (later the Community Services Planning Council), and in 1964 he was given the Public Health Award by the Chamber of Commerce, both in recognition of his pioneering work in the medical treatment of alcoholism.

He loved all his patients, his profession, and the style and manner of general practice of that time - house calls, surgery, hospital rounds, obstetrics - which now seem to have ended so long ago.

He was on the active staff of the Mercy Hospital, American River Hospital and the Sutter Hospitals. He served on the Society's Board of Directors in 1971.

His retirement plans were not completely realized because of the death in 1985 of Carmen, to whom he was devoted. Later, he was fortunate enough to fall in love again and was married to Jeanne Miller in 2003.

In addition to his family and partner, he leaves behind a large group of loyal and grateful patients and a shrinking generation of contemporary physicians.

We mourn the passing of a good and gentle physician, and the end of his era of medical practice.

- Otto W. Neubuerger, MD

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