



IN MEMORIAM



Frederick E. Pratt, MD, 1926-2006

WHEN FREDERICK PRATT DIED on August 25th, he terminated his third career as a physician. His first began in 1954 in Folsom where he and his wife, Dr. Anna Condos Pratt, worked in general practice while raising small children. Thereafter, he and Anna, both of whom had both graduated from the University of Vermont Medical School, returned back East and he undertook a residency in plastic surgery.

They returned to Sacramento in 1962 whereupon Anna completed training as a pathologist and Fred became the area's fourth plastic surgeon.

In this, Fred was a bit different. Born in North Clarendon, Vermont, on August 18, 1926, he could never shake off his Vermont "country doc" ethic to help the neediest. He went outside the more posh downtown to the North Area where there was no plastic surgeon. He went to Arcade and Community Hospitals, and later, Mercy San Juan and American River Hospitals.

In 1968, he was the founder of the Sutter Cleft Palate Panel, a volunteer group of specialists from the community. For years, he also volunteered at UCD Medical Center.

Fred was of great help to me when I arrived in 1970. At this time, he was heavily into race horses - owning and racing them. Although other doctors also cultivated race horses, they lost their shirts. But Fred was different. He became quite successful, winning on some of the finest tracks in the country. True to his folksy way, he did not seem to mind if, in his ultra-plain waiting room, some horse trainer in bandages from a hand injury sat next to a face lift patient. Nevertheless, all his patients seemed to love him.

In 1974, Anna died and, a few years later, Fred married Patricia, a nurse whom he had known from American River Hospital.

Upon retiring from private practice in 1986, Fred was different. He didn't retire. He began his third career as a volunteer, repairing children with all sorts of deformities all over the third world.¹ Numerous visits have taken him to Latin and South America, Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan and India.

Some plastic surgeons also do this, going on well-endowed, comfortable junkets. But again, Fred was different. He purchased his own sutures and paid for his own airfare and that of Patricia when she went with him.

I doubt there is another plastic surgeon in America who has performed more cleft-lip/palates than Fred. In 1989, he became associated with the SPIRIT program of the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society; he also founded a plastic surgery clinic at C Street where he recruited Alan Lim, Kirk Van Rooyan and me as co-volunteers.

Our excellent colleague received the Medical Honor Award from the Medical Society, as well as awards from Sacramento County in recognition of his selfless work. Not particularly religious, Fred, however, was absolutely orthodox in his humanitarianism.

He was a wonderfully different kind of doctor.

Besides Patricia, Fred is survived by his five children, numerous grand-children and great grand children. A memorial service will celebrate Fred Pratt's life at 3:00 pm on October 1st at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento, 2425 Sierra Blvd.

- *F. James Rybka, MD*

1. "Working Out of the Box" in the previous issue of *Sierra Sacramento Valley Medicine*.



Dr. Pratt at work for SPIRIT



Dr. Prat with his wife, Patricia, at the 2005 Volunteer Recognition Dinner.

It is with a heavy heart that the SPIRIT (Sacramento Physicians Initiative to Reach out, Innovate and Teach) Project suffers the loss of Fred Pratt, MD. Dr. Pratt donated his time and expertise to treat the medically indigent in Sacramento County through SPIRIT since 1989.

Not only was he one of the founding SPIRIT physicians, he personally provided medical care to countless hundreds of Sacramento residents who would have otherwise gone without. His charm and wit were a gift to all who were lucky enough to know him.

We will miss his sparkling blue eyes, his ready smile, and his intense commitment to SPIRIT and healthcare in his community. Fred Pratt touched all of our lives and will never be forgotten.

- *Kris Wallach, Project Manager*

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