



IN MEMORIAM



J. William Kohl, MD, 1927-2006

TALENTED EYE SURGEON; kind, caring physician; advocate for world peace; gentle, loving family man. All of these attributes describe Justin William (Bill) Kohl, MD, who died on October 23 after a two year battle with carcinoma of the bladder.

Bill was born in Centralia, Illinois on June 30, 1927 where he received his primary education. Since his family moved during his high school years, he attended three high schools in Sacramento, Albuquerque and Berkeley. After high school he went into the U. S. Navy where he became a sonar specialist. This experience was extremely valuable to him later on as he taught others at UC Davis and was a respected pioneer of ultrasound examination of the eye. Bill's premed education was obtained at the University of California, Berkeley. and his MD was granted at Northwestern University in 1953. He took his ophthalmology residency at UC San Francisco from 1954 to 1957. During this time he met and married Ann McAllister. They had three children, Elizabeth, Charles and Brian.

Bill had a busy, active private practice for 40 years in Sacramento. During this time he was a volunteer teacher of ophthalmology in the UC Davis Department of Ophthalmology, which he helped to establish in 1966. He retired as a Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology in 1998. In 1966, he left his practice for one year and became an American Fellow at the Saint John's Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem, Jordan. He performed many corneal transplants at this facility. He also became active in the Eye Bank of Jordan. Eventually he was knighted in the American Order of the Knights of Saint John for his contribution to needy patients in their hospital. The corneal grafts that he did in Jordan gave him the experience he needed to become the first to do corneal surgery in Sacramento.

Because of political unrest, the Kohl family was evacuated to Cyprus near the end of his time in Jordan. This influenced him greatly and for the rest of his life he had a deep interest in advocating peace in the Middle East and throughout the world.

Bill was president of the California Association of Ophthalmology in 1954. At this time he was also a founder and board member of the California Medical Eye Care Insurance Company.

In the SSVMS, Bill was a founder and chair of the Environmental Health Committee. He collaborated with the Sacramento Lung Association to create the Environmental Council of Sacramento. Here, he worked to clear the air from the heavy, acrid smoke that Sacramento experienced each fall from rice stalk burning. So-called "back burning" techniques were developed to eliminate the smoke. He also served on the Medical Society's Public Health, Legislative and Scholarship Committees. Along with others, he spearheaded the work of the Sacramento Peace Action Committee, the Sacramento Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Sacramento Chapter of the United Nations Associations.

Bill's faith was deep and pure. This strong belief in his Lord sustained him through some

rough times and set an example for all of us. Bill Kohl was a very special friend who will be greatly missed by me and many others in our community.

As his associate in practice, Rick Jones said, "We have lost one of our great ones."

- Byron H. Demorest, MD

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