



## IN MEMORIAM

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**Quentin Bonser, MD,  
1920-2007**

QUENTIN BONSER, MD, an icon of the El Dorado County medical community, died at home with his family just short of his 87th birthday.

Known to his friends on the Marshall Hospital medical staff as "Quint" or "QB," Dr. Bonser had a profound influence on medicine in El Dorado County during his career here from 1961 to 1989. Even after his retirement, Quint chaired Marshall's morbidity and mortality meetings for another decade.

Quint was born in Washington State and spent his teen years in Whittier, California. His high school basketball team won the state championship in 1938. He eventually attended UCLA, where he also played basketball "before that Wooden fellow came around," as he told me once (with a twinkle in his eye).

He earned his MD from UCSF in 1945 and was chief of surgery at Travis Air Force Base in 1951-52. After practicing for five years in Visalia, Dr. Bonser moved his family to Placerville in 1961 - just two years after Marshall Hospital opened its doors. He was the first board-certified physician in Placerville. He was chief of staff at Marshall twice and influenced nearly everything that went on at the hospital.

In 1971-73, Quint volunteered for three tours of duty of two months each in Viet Nam. There he treated civilians and military alike. He once said to me, "I was in the military for World War II and the Korean War, and I went over for Viet Nam. They are going to have to do the next war without me."

Quint was a doctor's doctor. His consultations were always a model of thoroughness and yet they were also succinct and clear. Nothing important was left out and nothing unnecessary was included. How I wish that today's computer generated consultations could come close to duplicating Quint's H&Ps!

Quint's dedication to his patients was legendary. His nightly rounds always included double-checking the addition of each patient's I & O charts. He often found errors and once said to me, "They know I'm going to add these columns up every night. Wouldn't you think they would at least double-check the totals on my patients before I get here?"

Quint was one of a group of crusty Marshall Hospital medical staff old-timers when I started practice in 1976. I learned a lot from those guys. He and Howard Bliss, MD, used to laughingly refer to themselves as "Statler and Waldorf" (the two old curmudgeons who occupied the box seat and heckled the performances in *The Muppet Show*). The analogy was apt.

Quint was also very close to John Mathewson, MD. These two doctors found inspiration from their daughters, who became nurses. They founded a Mathewson-Bonser Nursing Scholarship for Marshall Hospital nurses. The Scholarship is funded by an annual Oktoberfest event.

No review of Quint's life would be complete without mentioning his family. He and his wife, Loie, were married for 62 years. They have four children, 12 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. All of them were dear to Quint. When I saw him with his family I saw a very different man, one who seemed infinitely patient and amused with whatever his grandchildren could cook up.

The Bonsers have a family cabin at Echo Lake. For years Quint would invite the Marshall Medical Staff By-laws Committee up to Echo Lake to review the the By-laws. These were the best committee meetings I have ever attended. We actually got our work done quickly enough without any electronic interruptions, and then we could all kick back and enjoy one of the nicest spots anywhere in the world. We had to boat in and out to the cabin, but that just made the meetings even better.

Quint received many honors during his life including our Medical Society's Honor Award in 1996, the Helping Hands Award from Marshall in 2006 and the AMA's Certificate of Appreciation for Humanitarian Service. We have a heavily used public trail in Placerville with a special bench at its eastern end. The bench is dedicated to Dr. Bonser as "The Man Who Walks the Walk." Quint loved the Placerville Trail and really appreciated the dedication of the bench to him. I cannot think of a better way to remember the life of this excellent physician.

- Earl R. "Trey" Washburn, MD

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