



## IN MEMORIAM

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### **Harold G. Schluter, MD, 1920-2008**

MY VERY GOOD FRIEND, Harold G. Schluter, MD, died in Nehalem, Oregon, on January 12. I knew Harold since 1949, when he moved to Sacramento after his obstetrics-gynecology residency at Mary's Help Hospital in San Francisco. He joined the practice of his uncle, Hans F. Schluter, MD. "Honas" was one of Sacramento's most esteemed physicians in the early 20th century.

Harold was born in Pendleton, Oregon, where he grew up on his parents' large wheat ranch. His undergraduate work was at the University of Oregon and his medical degree from the University of Michigan Medical School. His internship was at the Multnomah County Hospital in Portland. He was a diplomate of the American Board of Obstetrics-Gynecology.

Harold's first office was a small home on Alhambra Blvd., because in those years medical office space was hard to find. In 1952, Dr. Robert L. Range joined him, and they practiced together for 37 years - interrupted in 1954-56 when Harold, a Navy reservist, served at Whidbey Island, Washington. He delivered over 6,000 babies here, and was loved by his patients and respected by his colleagues.

I first met him at Sacramento County Hospital. He was my attending physician during my first deliveries there. One day three of us interns invited him to join us in our quarters for a card game, which he assumed would be bridge. He lost to the lowly interns that night in a game of poker, and the amount grew in the telling. From that day our friendship grew. He loaned me his office two afternoons a week while my office was being constructed. He was a warm, gentle, caring man.

Harold had numerous interests, many dating back to his days on the wheat ranch. He grew peaches, figs, kiwis, and specimen orchids in two greenhouses in his back yard. He and his wife won so many awards for their orchids and arrangements that, in embarrassment, he stopped entering shows.

An intense interest was wine. He owned six acres of chardonnay and pinot noir grapes on a mountain top near Saratoga, and was an investors in the nearby Mount Eden Vineyards along with several other Sacramento doctors. I remember warmly a large party he gave there to celebrate the year's grape harvest. A kid goat was barbecued on a long wooden spit over an open pit of coals. For several hours we took turns rotating the spit by hand. The smoke got in our eyes, but we were rewarded with only the best wines on that day - and on every other day of his life that he served wine. Harold was a master at blind tastings; he often could name the grape, the vineyard, and sometimes even the year.

Harold and I called our years of practice the Golden Years. We felt among us a deep professional comradeship. Every year we had a Founders' Day banquet of the medical society. One of the best was in 1968, its 100th anniversary. Harold served on the committee that secured Danny Thomas for the evening's entertainment. In those years, doctors had time each morning for coffee together at the hospitals after rounds. There were warm exchanges about friends and families, life and medicine, wit; a few curbstome

consultations thrown in.

Harold and Margaret were married over 64 years and had two children, Hans and Karyn, and a grandson, Robert. They remain my very good friends. I miss Harold and those golden years of medicine.

- *John M. Babich, MD*

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