



Darwin Kennard Dewitt Holian M.D.

April 23, 1923 - April 27, 2012

Darwin K. HOLIAN went home to heaven to be with his Lord on April 27, 2012.

Darwin was born in Maynard, Minnesota, on April 9, 1923, to Kenneth Holian and Jessie Kuiper Holian. He was raised in Hendricks, Minnesota, where his father was the editor and publisher of the weekly Hendricks Pioneer newspaper and his mother was the reporter.

Darwin graduated from the local high school in 1941 and was given a scholarship to St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, where he attended for two years until joining the U.S. Navy during WWII. Because he was a pre-med student, the military chose to continue his education at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio, which he attended for one year before being transferred to Great Lakes Naval Hospital as a hospital corpsman where he helped to care for wounded sailors. The Navy then saw fit to enroll him in 1944 in the University of Minnesota Medical School at Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he remained through the end of the war, graduating in 1947. Darwin married his college sweetheart, Eleanor Eastvold, on November 11, 1944.

When finished with medical school, because he had received schooling by the military, "Doc" was required to devote two years as a doctor in the service. He chose to enter the Army Medical Corps which stationed him at the Navajo Ordnance Depot in Flagstaff, Arizona. He and Eleanor and their first daughter, Charlotte, had a wonderful year exploring the Southwest until the Korean Conflict broke out in June of 1950. Three days later he was on his way to the

Orient with the 3rd Infantry Division as a front-line surgeon. In February 1951 he broke his right arm while digging a foxhole in the frozen ground and was evacuated to Japan where he remained as a surgeon in a military hospital in Tokyo after his arm healed. He was honorably discharged in July of that year and began his surgical training at the University of Minnesota Medical School. Being a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans made him especially aware of his former military brothers. While in Minneapolis, his second daughter, Barbara, was born.

Darwin's first practice as a general surgeon was in Albert Lea, Minnesota, beginning in 1954. While there, he became a Diplomat of the American Board of Surgery and later a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. During Doc and Eleanor's 14 years in Albert Lea, two other children were born, Steven and Ann, and a full life of service and blessings was had.

Leaving their oldest daughter Charlotte who was in college, the rest of the family moved to Santa Barbara in 1968. Despite the already numerous surgeons in Santa Barbara, Darwin took to the challenge, and after three years of working emergency rooms and assisting other surgeons, his previous experience and dogged stick-to-it-iveness finally resulted in an active practice. His last ten medical years Darwin concentrated on doing obesity surgery, performing an operation originally designed in Italy by Dr. Scopinaro. As a pioneer in this field, he gave talks around the world and had articles published both in surgical magazines as well as in a Canadian obesity surgery book. He once said, "This was an operation that totally changed my life as well as the lives of hundreds of others." His faithful secretary, Trisha Gilman, was his right hand supporter in the endeavor. They had the first computerized medical office in Santa Barbara and Doc continued to be interested in computers all his life.

Darwin served as Chief of Staff at Goleta Valley Hospital and served a stint as a member of the Board of the Santa Barbara Medical Society. In addition to his practice, Doc did medical missionary work in Mexico, Honduras, the Philippines, and Bulgaria, but he was not granted a VISA to work in China, so

Eleanor and he used that visit to pass out Bibles undercover instead. As a doctor who believed in 24/7 care of his patients, he was on call for forty years. A true general surgeon, he used to say, "They don't make us anymore." Darwin was involved in the Boy Scouts, Elks, and Kiwanis. He loved golf, fishing and big game hunting, was a church trustee, and as a member of the VISTAS Lifelong Learning Center, he continued his desire to stay current and keep his mind alert. Crossword puzzles and Sukodu were also aids to that end.

An avid Bible scholar, Darwin was raised a Lutheran, was a Baptist theologically, but enjoyed worshiping with the Presbyterians. His love of the Scriptures tied in well with his Bible teaching wife who often tempered his strict interpretations.

Darwin concluded, "How could one not be grateful for such a fulfilling life? I have had a most satisfying and rewarding one. To God be the glory!"

The Holian family would like to express heartfelt thanks to The Samarkand Retirement Community, Dr. Gregg Newman, Assisted Home Hospice, and Independent Nurse Consulting for helping them to keep Dad at home until the end, per his wish.

He requested that memorials be sent to: Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital Foundation, Bible Study Fellowship International, or Compassion International.

Cemetery Details

Santa Barbara Cemetery

901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-3231

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY **25**. 2:00 PM (PT)

The Mountain Room at the Samarkand
2550 Treasure Dr.
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

Tribute Wall

BM

“ 12 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Barbara Mejia - May 09, 2012 at 11:24 PM

TD

“ *To Char, to the spirit and memory of Doctor Holian and to all who share in the grief of his passing,*

Mankind was enriched for having Darwin among us. This vacuum won't be completely filled. Another of the greatest of the Greatest Generation has realized his reward.

Tom Dahlen

Thomas Leroy Dahlen - May 08, 2012 at 08:11 AM

CG

“ To the Holian Family,
"Doc" was a familiar face to me on Sunday, and he was always quick to make the first "hello" when we would catch a glimpse of each other going into church, or exiting.
We share some personal insight now and then, and I loved his good cheer and smile.
God's Blessings to you, his family. I will miss seeing Darwin at church...where he always sat on the right just in front of the sound-board, or proximate.
He will be missed by all of the ELMO Congregation! In Christ, Carol Gillis, J.D.

Carol Gillis - May 07, 2012 at 07:28 PM

KG

“ My sympathy to the Holian family. I attended Oakwood Elementary School in Albert Lea for three years and was a classmate of Ann's.

Kim (Ruble) Gooden - May 07, 2012 at 06:22 AM

JC

“ We will always remember Dr. Holian. He delivered both our children by C-section. I also worked with him in O.R. as a student nurse at Naeve Hospital in Albert Lea. He was a very good teacher! Our sympathy to his family. Jane and Wesley Crowe, Hartland, Mn.

Jane and Wesley Crowe - May 06, 2012 at 04:01 PM

JP

“ For several years when he first practiced in SB, Darwin shared an office in the Goleta Valley Medical Building with my husband. The association was wonderful; Darwin was truly the kindest of men and a skilled surgeon. Another great part of Goleta Valley history has departed.
Jackie Parker, wife of Dr. Robert Parker, d. 2006



Jackie Parker - May 05, 2012 at 04:43 PM

TM

I knew both of these surgeons very well; came to SB Goleta Valley Hospital as an NA in 1978; IDK why but Dr Holian took a liking to me and would find me on the floor when he came to see his patients and do dressing changes; he would have me accompany him for his rounds, teaching and encouraging me along the way; kept telling me I needed to go to school and be a nurse; hopefully he has seen from above that I'm about to celebrate 40 years as a very accomplished but humble RN; the respect and achievements I have gained are greatly in part to learning key qualities and standards from people like him and Dr. Parker (who we often called a big gruff Teddy Bear). Was talking about Dr H today and decided to look him up; sad to see that he has passed. A truly gifted and wonderful MD that I was blessed to encounter so early on in what turned out to be a wonderful calling for me.

Tess (Teri) Muro - December 28, 2022 at 10:41 AM