

Obituaries

The Ogden Surgical-Medical Society extends its sympathy to the family and friends of our colleagues who have passed on. Their presence and contribution to medicine will be momentarily missed.

2019

John E. White, M.D. On June 30, 2019, John Edward White, M.D. passed away at his home in Eugene, Oregon. John was born on February 17, 1952, to Edward and Pearl (Leveritt) White in Atwater, California.

John was highly educated, graduating first from U.C.L.A. with his B.A. in Biology in 1974, then from the University of California, Berkeley School of Optometry with his Doctor of Optometry and B.S. degrees in 1980, and completing his education by graduating from Jefferson Medical College and receiving his Doctor of Medicine degree in 1997.

John was a board-certified family practice physician at Springfield Family Physicians. Previously John worked as a family practice physician in Boise, Idaho; Ogden Utah; and Beijing, China. John did his family practice residency at Montgomery Hospital in Norristown, Pa. Prior to going to Jefferson Medical College and becoming a physician, John was an optometrist for nine years in Washington, D.C. and Tokyo, Japan.

John enjoyed helping people, especially his patients of all ages. He liked to have fun: he was known for his unusual ties featuring cartoon characters. John enjoyed travelling, he and his wife spent five years living abroad in China and Japan. John completed eight Marine Corps Marathons in Washington, D.C., and enjoyed water skiing, snowboarding and skiing. He will be remembered for his voracious reading, trivia expertise, and most importantly his dedication to his patients and the many people he helped in his years as a physician.

John is survived by his spouse Loretta of Eugene, OR; daughter Nicolle Tofani Lofgren (Patrick) who is a veterinarian in Great Neck, NY; Daughter Julia Tofani White who is a U.S. Forest Ranger technician in Trout Lake, WA; son Andrew Tofani White who is a college student in Golden, CO; sister Dr. Reba White of Merced, CA; and sister Flora Thompson of Fremont, CA.

2020

Jan Frederick Christensen, MD, passed away surrounded by family on July 14, 2020. He is survived by his loving and devoted wife of 50 years, Ruth, their eight children, 35 grandchildren, and his three siblings.

Jan was born on November 30, 1946, in Riverside, California. The oldest of four children, Jan became an example for his siblings with his love of music, silliness, and service. Jan graduated from Ramona High School in 1965 and

attended Brigham Young University that fall. He served a full-time mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Switzerland Zurich Mission, where he developed a lifelong love for the German language, food, and people.

Jan met his future wife, Ruth Kelly, in the summer of '69. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple on May 28, 1970. Jan graduated cum laude from BYU with a degree in chemistry. He and Ruth moved to Riverside where Jan earned a medical degree from Loma Linda University School of Medicine. A residency in family practice medicine brought Jan and Ruth's growing family to Charleston, South Carolina, for three years.

Jan chose to set up his private practice in Gunnison, Utah. In 1978, where Jan served the Gunnison community for 34 years until his retirement. He worked in different capacities at the hospital, including chief of medical staff. During that tenure, he helped expand and renovate the hospital, bringing modern facilities and equipment to the community.

Steven E. Kammeyer, MD, 72, passed away April 29, 2020. Steven was raised in Denison, Iowa, the second child of Armin and Maybelle Kammeyer's four children. As a child, he worked with his dad on cars and wooden furniture which ultimately led to his winning a scholarship to the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. Steven once pedaled his bicycle from Denison to Chicago, where he

drove a bus while studying dentistry. Steven then traveled to Long Beach, California where he served in the Navy Dental Corps.

Throughout his life, he built many astonishing pieces: dozens of rocking chairs from exotic woods; a half pipe for his son; a three-story air-conditioned treehouse for his daughter; a harpsichord; an authentic gypsy caravan and an airplane which he piloted once. He loved music and sang energetically at any opportunity. He redesigned and renovated every house he ever lived in, including his last home.

Steven was an excellent dentist, but most people will remember him for his beautiful creations, foremost among them his children, Grace and Oliver Kammeyer. He lives on in their hearts and in the heart of his wife, Mel Kearney, and his siblings Jerry, Kay and Greg. Steven was one of the fortunate few who did exactly what he wanted in his 72 years. His family is grateful for his love and drive which left so much beauty in this world he passed through.

2021

Merrill Anderson Godfrey, M.D., 87, passed away December 4, 2021, surrounded by family at McKay-Dee Hospital in Ogden, Utah. Merrill was born on October 26, 1934, in Lovell, Wyoming, the oldest of three children, Richard, Larry. He attended the University of Wyoming where he earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry. Merrill attended graduate school in Nebraska where he

received a medical doctorate from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine serving his medical residency at the University of Utah Hospital and Dee Memorial Hospital specializing in obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN).

Merrill established a medical practice in Ogden, Utah where he resided and served the community. He was a partner in the Ogden Women's Clinic delivering babies and providing women's healthcare for nearly 30 years. His calm and soothing demeanor as a caregiver is an attribute forever remembered by his patients. In addition to a successful medical practice, Merrill fulfilled many roles within the McKay-Dee Hospital organization including Medical Staff President, Medical Director, Chief of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and was a member of the board of trustees. Merrill also served as vice-chairman of the IHC Health Plans board of directors. After retiring from fulltime work in 2000, Merrill volunteered as a part-time health care provider primarily providing patient care at the Ogden Rescue Mission.

Merrill enjoyed traveling the world with his wife Evelyn. Together, whether it was by plane, ship, car or motorhome, they visited unique destinations encompassing both pleasure and humanitarian objectives. Their humanitarian initiatives included administering polio vaccinations in Delhi, India, sustaining school and service projects in Ecuador and procuring and distributing medical equipment in Mexico. Merrill had many hobbies. Some of his favorite outdoor

pastimes were golfing, skiing, bird hunting, fishing and hiking. Merrill was also an avid puzzler and loved to read anything in print be it a newspaper, magazine or a book.

Merrill was blessed with six children, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Merrill is survived by his wife, Evelyn and his brother, Larry (Elvira); children, Rob (Karen), Lisa (Ken) Beed, Chris (Natalie), Cresta (Brad) Jackson and Janene (John) Sparks; grandchildren, Brittany (Eric) Newton, Brooke, Coleman, Nicholas, Chelsea, Layla and Robert (Allie) Morgan; great-grandchildren, Parker, Sarah, JJ, Chevelle and Hazel.

Frederick Deiss, M.D., beloved physician passed away on Friday, June 11, 2021. Dr. Deiss was born in Oakland, California on Dec. 5, 1929. He graduated from Pacific Union College in 1951 and earned his medical degree from the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University), in 1957.

Dr. Deiss had a love of the outdoors, as he was an avid fisherman and hunter. He would say that hunting was just a great excuse to get outdoors and spend time with his sons, son-in-law and grandsons. Though they were often outnumbered, he took special joy in introducing his daughter, a couple of daughters-in-law and several granddaughters to the great outdoors and to hunting

and shooting. In addition, those who knew him well also knew that he was an avid reader; in fact, he always had a book handy as he was waiting to deliver the next newborn.

It was estimated that at the time of his retirement from private practice, Dr. Deiss had delivered more babies than any other doctor in the state of Wyoming to that date! Not infrequently, families would stop him on the street to thank him and provide an update of their family members. He was always gracious, kind and seemed to remember everyone personally! His ‘bedside’ manner was sincere, warm and life-affirming. He had the uncanny ability to smile with his eyes.

In “retirement” he was a professor for the University of Wyoming Family Practice program in Casper for over 30 years. In that capacity he trained a generation of young physicians who now serve in many of Wyoming’s rural communities and surrounding states.

Dr. Deiss practiced family medicine in several Wyoming communities and in Idaho and was licensed in Alaska so that he could take locum tenens jobs in their Indigenous public health clinics. For all of his contributions to the practice of medicine in Wyoming, Dr. Deiss was named Wyoming Family Physician of the Year in 1986 and Wyoming Medical Society Physician of the Year in 1995.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 40 years, his four children, two stepchildren (Debra Swedberg, (Jay) and Alan Mitchell), 14 grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.