



Theodore W. Loring, MD

1916 - 2003

Ted Loring passed away peacefully in his sleep early Sunday morning, May 11th, 2003. Even at 86 years old, he remained active and sharp, enjoying the company of family, friends, and his wife of nearly 60 years, Ruth. He was still professionally involved with the Humboldt-Del Norte Medical Society, Norcal Mutual Insurance, and the Pacific Coast Obstetric and Gynecologic Society.

Ted was born November 23rd, 1916, in Belize (then British Honduras). He came to the United States at age 16 to pursue his education. He ultimately graduated from Stanford University with a B.S. in 1943. He received his Doctorate in Medicine from Stanford in 1946, and following two years in the US Army Medical Corp, returned for his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology. In 1951, displaying qualities that would become prominent in the years to come, Ted decided to forgo lucrative offers in the Bay area and join Paul Roberts, MD, in a small remote coastal town in far northern California. There, the need for his skills as a board certified OB/GYN was much greater.

What followed was a career that spanned more than four decades and over 6,000 deliveries. Ted was an excellent clinician and a skilled surgeon, well liked by his patients and his colleagues. Ted received many awards recognizing his professional excellence. Two of the more prestigious awards were his election into the Pacific Coast OB/GYN Society in 1972 and the Frederick K. M. Plessner Award from the CMA in 1988. The Pacific Coast OB/GYN Society is an invitation only organization dedicated to excellence in the development and delivery of health care to women through the collaboration of physician educators, researchers, and private practitioners. Ted became President of the group in 1996. The Plessner Award is given to physicians who best exemplify service to rural areas.

Ted's intelligence, excellence and drive were not limited to his practice of medicine. Ted was a community leader as well. In response to a local shortage of nurses, Ted was instrumental, with Dr. Homer Balbonis, in starting the nursing program at HSU. When a 1967 law allowed third party payers to contract directly with physicians, Ted served as a founding member and President of the Humboldt-Del Norte Foundation for Medical Care. In response to the malpractice crisis in 1975, Ted became a founding director and Treasurer of Norcal Mutual Insurance Co. When a high rate of home births jeopardized the quality of maternal care in the area, Ted organized and provided physician back-up services for midwives at the Humboldt Perinatal Clinic. As the first physician director of Union Labor Hospital Board, Ted worked to ensure the survival of General Hospital during the financial hardships of the 1980's. When General was eventually lost, he converted Union Labor's assets into the Union Labor Health Foundation, a charitable association providing grants to local organizations for health care pursuits. Throughout his life, he was also active in his church, Boy Scouts, Rotary, KEET-TV, Baywood Country Club, and the Ingomar Club.

I knew Ted for a very short 16 years. During that time he was my partner, my mentor, my confidant, and my very close friend. Ted was intelligent, compassionate, talented, and humble. He had undying respect for others, whether friend or patient or stranger. Ted had a way of seeing the good in people, even when it was difficult to find. Ted was fair and honest. Ted served the people of the North Coast unwaveringly for over five decades as a physician, community member, and friend. He gave to us much more than he asked in return. I feel very privileged to have known him and to have called him my friend. Thank you, Ruth, for sharing him so graciously with us all. I will miss him very much.

By William Weiderman, M.D.