

OFF CALL



Jim Milton Hercher, M.D.

July 1, 1931 - June 19, 2021

Jim was born July 1, 1931, and grew up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, in a large extended German family. Playing sax and clarinet in High School Band plus a band gig every Saturday night at the Jesse James Supper Club, scouting (Eagle rank), selling Boy Scout clothes for J.C. Penny, and his girlfriend, Betty Jo Hardy, kept him busy. After graduation from Pine Bluff High, he received his B.S. in Chemistry and Music from University of Arkansas at Monticello, attending on a music scholarship. Studying medicine won over choosing a music career and he received his M.D. from Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana. Jim and Betty married the first year of medical school and during Jim's internship at Sacramento, California, County Hospital found their future home in Eureka, with fellow intern, Roy Wittwer, as a partner.

After being drafted into the Army and completing his residency in Family Practice at Ireland Army Hospital, Ft. Knox, Kentucky, Jim was assigned to Brook Army Hospital, Ft. Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, as Chief of Professional Science. He was a Fellow of American Academy of Family Practice.

After discharge from the Army, Jim and Roy Wittwer opened Eureka Family Practice in Eureka, California. Jim was President and CFO until retirement after 30 years at which time Eureka Family Practice had grown to eight doctors. Dr. Hercher made significant contributions to Humboldt County, caring for families, serving on committees and in general promoting mental and physical health services. He was Chief of Staff at St. Joseph Hospital and General Hospital. He believed that two of his most significant contributions were establishing the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and an Emergency Room with full-time physician coverage.

Activities in the community included forty years in the Henderson Center Kiwanis Club, Butler Valley Board, Catholic Charities and the Diocese of Santa Rosa Financial Board in both Eureka and Santa Rosa.

For personal enrichment, he also received a Master's in Ministry from Seattle (Washington) University.

After retirement from medical practice, Jim, after four years of formation, was ordained a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church. He was assigned to Sacred Heart and St. Bernard parishes in Eureka and Holy Spirit parish in Santa Rosa. The first couple he officiated at a marriage for was a woman he, 30 years previously, delivered as a baby. He also served as Director of Diaconate for Sonoma, Lake, Napa, Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte counties with 35 deacons and their wives.

Leaving Eureka for a life care retirement community, Spring Lake Village, in Santa Rosa, Jim

was President of the Residents' Council, Chairman of Fire and Disaster as well as the Medical and Chapel Advisory Committees and other committees.

Jim is survived by Betty, his wife of 68 years. Surviving also are his family: Richard Hercher and his family, David and Sherri Hercher and their family, Tom and Jo Wattle and their family; and loved friends of many years.

There will be a graveside commitment service at St. Bernard's Cemetery on Wednesday, June 30, 2021 at 11:00am. Memorials may be made to Jim and Betty Hercher Endowment at Humboldt Area Foundation for direct mental health services in Humboldt County or Evergreen Lodge in Eureka, or a charity of your choice.