



Charleton “Chuck” Royal Schwartz, M.D. 1910-2007

Dr. Chuck Schwartz, long-time family physician in Fortuna, died quietly at home on July 9, 2007, with loving family members at his bedside. Chuck was born February 3, 1910, the eighth of nine children, to Preston and Katharine Henszey Schwartz, in Germantown, Pennsylvania.

When Chuck was six months old, the family moved to Sierra Madre, California, a small town in eastern Los Angeles County. That move provided Chuck Access to the Pacific Ocean, near and around Newport Beach, a happy turn of events for a boy who learned to love body surfing, sailing and the outdoors. Following his high school graduation he entered UCLA in the pre-med program and graduated four years later. He received his medical education at Stanford University School of Medicine, completing studies in 1936. After graduation he entered medical practice in San Francisco with Dr. Leo Eloesser, a noted Stanford professor of surgery and one of Chuck’s medical mentors.

In 1940, Chuck married Evelyn Calvert, the love of his life, to whom he was wonderfully married for sixty-six years until her death, May 14, 2007. Their lives were interrupted by World War II, during which Chuck spent three years overseas with the U.S. Army’s 59th Evacuation Unit, a field surgical hospital, an assignment for which he was selected by Dr. Carleton Mathewson, a Stanford surgeon and another of Chuck’s mentors and a lifelong friend. The unit participated in the North African campaign and the invasions of Sicily, the Italian peninsula and southern France. Chuck was present at the liberation of Paris and then crossed the Rhine into Germany for the final months of the war. He was assigned to a special unit that entered Dachau Concentration Camp in Bavaria shortly after its 67,000 prisoners were liberated at the end of April, 1945.

Following the war, and his release from the army, Chuck wanted to start a medical practice in a small community where he could raise a family and enjoy the outdoors. He found this community in Fortuna, where he and Evelyn moved in December, 1945, with their three year old daughter, Linda. Sons Chuck and John were born in 1946 and 1952.

Dr. Schwartz, as he was known affectionately by his hundreds and hundreds of patients, loved the practice of medicine in Fortuna and its surrounding communities. He was, in turn, loved and respected by his patients. He made house calls all over the larger community, even when, during the winter months, it meant crossing the Eel River in a boat. He delivered many babies both at Scotia Hospital and, later, after its closing, at Redwood Memorial Hospital. His office hired the first nurse practitioner in Humboldt County. During the 1950's, Chuck was joined in practice by Dr. Harold Auerhan, with whom he continued in practice until his retirement in 1984, bringing to an end his 39 years of service to the community.

During his retirement, Chuck had time to pursue a number of his lifelong interests, including hunting, fishing, tending his vegetable garden, traveling with friends and attending sporting events with yearly trips to Arizona for spring baseball practice and to Oregon for basketball and

track events. Chuck continued his enthusiasm and interest in sports long after he was no longer able to travel to these events.

Chuck was an outstanding physician, a gentle, kind, generous, caring, compassionate man, who was devoted to his patients and their well-being. He was a careful listener, a trait often cited by his patients. He loved small town medical practice, its intimacy and the strong sense of community and belonging that it gave him. His quiet presence, infectious smile, good humor and enduring positive outlook will be long remembered.

by Jack W. Irvine, M.D.