



Harley Joseph Racer M.D.

April 15, 2012

Racer, Harley Joseph, MD age 87, died on March 21, 2012, in Bloomington, with his beloved wife of 65 years, Laretta, at his side. He was preceded in death by his parents, the Rev. Harley Moline Racer and Margaret Jane Racer, his mother-in-law Vera Dunphy, and his siblings - David, Margaret (Crysler), Paul, James, and Grace Elizabeth (Welch). He was the beloved father of Catherine of Brookline, MA; Anne of Andover, MA; Peter of Minneapolis, MN; and Jane of Hinesburg, VT. He was the exceptional father-in-law of Thomas Rice, Gloria Olson, and David Cloutier. His grandchildren - Conor and Fiona Rice, Anna (Peter Skold) and Evan Racer, Peter and Asa Cloutier - adored him as much as he adored them. He also is survived by 17 nieces and nephews, as well as countless patients whom he treated and students whom he mentored during 52 years of medical practice. Harley's medical career began inadvertently when he served during World War II as a pharmacist's mate on a minesweeper in the South Pacific. He had intended to follow in his father's footsteps by joining the ministry, but his Navy war experience led him to enroll in the University of Minnesota Medical School after completing his undergraduate work at the U. Harley graduated from medical school as a family practitioner in 1952 and practiced in Gibbon and Stillwater, MN, before settling in Bloomington with his growing family in 1956. Bloomington was the quintessential post-war baby boomer community in the 1950s, and Harley's practice grew rapidly, as did his commitment to addressing the needs of his patients, both as individuals and as members of a family unit. Family practice

in the 1950s was receiving recognition as an important facet of American medicine, and Harley was asked to develop and implement the family practice residency program at Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park. He also served as first director of the program, and, during his tenure, was named Teacher of the Year in Family Practice. In mid-career, Harley and Laretta spent a year in Maine, where Harley served as director of the family practice program at Maine Medical Center. Returning to the Minneapolis metropolitan area in 1981, Harley practiced and taught family medicine at Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) for 25 years. He was on faculty at the U of M Medical School as an associate professor while teaching at HCMC. Shortly before he retired from family practice and teaching in 2004, Harley again was named Teacher of the Year in Family Practice. While raising a family in Bloomington, with four children in the public schools, Harley proudly served for eleven years on the Bloomington School Board. He often said one of the highlights of his service was voting for Title IX, which allowed girls to have the same access to organized sports as boys. Harley was committed to physical fitness and loved recreational sports: he was an active participant in running, biking, cross country skiing, and tennis, and he especially loved golfing with his brother Paul - an activity they shared well into their 80s. He also had a life-long love of music, particularly classical music and jazz, and he sang with his wife in the Minneapolis Bach Society chorus and various church choirs. He shared a great love of poetry with his sister (and poet), Grace Elizabeth Welch. Harley's impact on family and friends, patients and students, will live on in the compassionate interactions we have with each other over the coming months and years. His contributions to the profession he loved will be long remembered. A celebration of Harley's wonderful life will be held at Oak Grove Presbyterian Church, 2200 Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, on Sunday, April 22. The family will receive friends at the church beginning at 2 p.m. the service will begin at 3 p.m. A reception will follow immediately after the service. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that those who wish to honor Harley's life make donations to the Union Gospel Mission of St. Paul, the

Minnesota/ North Dakota Alzheimer's Foundation, or Oak Grove Presbyterian
Church of Bloomington. www.Washburn-McReavy.com Werness Brothers
Chapel 952.884.8145

Tribute Wall

TG

“ I remember visiting with Dr. Racer in the early 1970's. He was twenty years older than I, but he had me running all over the tennis court. Though I met him only a few times, I vividly remember his kind face and easy going demeanor. A true gentleman.

~

thomas goodwin,

cary, North Carolina

thomas goodwin - August 16, 2012 at 12:00 AM

RL

“ I am so sorry to hear of Dr. Racer's passing. I was a patient of his as a child, at HCFMC and he was also my disabled mothers doctor. My mom passed away in January, I like to think maybe she will see him again. He will always be one of the best men I ever knew.

~

Rose Lynnesdaughter,

Wichita, Kansas

Contact Me

Rose Lynnesdaughter - July 03, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DC

“ *To the Racer Family: One of the heroes in my life was Harley Racer, a great man, doctor, teacher, mentor, role model and dedicated human being. We worked 7 years together in the department of family medicine at the U of M. He was the pioneer family doctor that was instrumental in developing family medicine as a medical speciality. He was an outstanding leader and exemplary residency director and teacher. As a marvelous teacher he would use humor and practicality, and influenced the lives of a thousand of students and family practice residence. His legacy lives in the many doctors and patients he interacted with and provided care. My sorrow to hear of this death is elevated and comforted by my love for him and what I have learned from him that made me a better person, teacher, and professional. Love and sincere regrets to his wife and family. Dr. Don Cassata, Brighton, Colorado*

~

Donald Cassata,

Brighton, Colorado

Contact Me

Donald Cassata - June 19, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ memories of Dr. Racer in Stillwater came rushing back, in the Methodist Church at the hospital he was a dear kind soul and wanted you to know how highly he was regarded in both areas of his life. blessings to you all Sheila Evans Holmquist

~

Sheila Holmquist,

Palm Desert, California

Contact Me

Sheila Holmquist - April 19, 2012 at 12:00 AM

G(

“ *Dr. Racer was our family doctor when I was a child. Some of my childhood memories are of him, he was a wonderful doctor. I was never afraid of going to see him, such a kind and gentle man. Sending prayers to your family during the difficult days ahead.*

~

Gale Warn (Bacon),

Bloomington, Minnesota

Gale Warn (Bacon) - April 18, 2012 at 12:00 AM

HP

“*Harley Racer was instrumental in helping families that faced the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. His continued help and encouragement helped our family and many others through long caregiving years. The family of Alfred Pridgeon.*

~

Hilda M. Pridgeon,

Bloomington, Minnesota

Hilda M. Pridgeon - April 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ *I was one of many Physicians blessed to be under his teaching at HCMC. You will be missed. Lowell Stoltzfus, MD*

~

Lowell Stoltzfus,

Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

Lowell Stoltzfus - April 16, 2012 at 12:00 AM

NM

“ I remember Dr. Racer from when I was a child going to the Bloomington Clinic on Penn. He was a very nice person and a caring and amazing Doctor. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time.

~

Norma Macdonald,

Bloomington, Minnesota

Norma Macdonald - April 16, 2012 at 12:00 AM

MM

“*Harley was the most influential teacher I ever had in my life. A compassionate and astute mentor, his guidance helped me become the successful family doctor I am today. We need more physician-teachers like him; his committed and caring skill are rarities. I will miss him very deeply, and I extend my condolences to his entire family. What a man he was!*

~

Mary Jenkins, MD,

Huntington, New York

Mary Jenkins, MD - April 15, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ Sorry to hear of Harley's death. My sympathy to his family. Harley was an inspiration to all of us in family medicine education, especially his enthusiasm, caring and consideration of the whole person/family.

~

Dave Mersy,

Tucson, Arizona

Dave Mersy - April 15, 2012 at 12:00 AM