

NH-PCMS BULLETIN: SEPTEMBER 10, 2021

Henry Jordan, MD

Eulogy by Wayne Varner, MD

My name is Wayne Varner. I came to Wilmington as a pathologist in 1983. I encountered our friend Henry Jordan soon after my arrival in Wilmington in a most agreeable way. I had been hired to replace the retiring solo pathologist at Cape Fear Hospital, potentially a competitor to the pathology group practicing at New Hanover Regional Medical Center. However, I was welcomed with open arms and minds by the four pathologists at New Hanover who offered to help me in any way they could, Henry Jordan, Henry Singletary, Ralph McCoy and Bill Williams. They had been similarly supportive of my predecessor at Cape Fear, Richard Ackart. They even hosted a party to introduce me to the medical community. It was on this warm welcome that we built a relationship that eventually led to our merging our two practices, the first hospital based medical practice to serve both of Wilmington's hospitals.

Henry was a brilliant pathologist and laboratory administrator. He received his heritage as a community minded physician from both father and grandfather who were also physicians and who instilled in him an appreciation of medicine as an instrument of service. Like the other senior pathologists at New Hanover hospital, he mentored me at Cape Fear into my first role as a laboratory director. He demonstrated the academic brilliance that took him successfully from his home in Fairhope, Alabama, through his undergraduate years at Birmingham Southern College, Birmingham Alabama, medical school and an internship at Emory University, an internal medicine internship at Mayo Clinic. He then volunteered in the US Navy caring for Marines in Viet Nam. He then completed a pathology residency at the University of Alabama School of Medicine After training as a pathologist, he moved to and served the Wilmington community practicing in the New Hanover hospital laboratory as pathologist for 25 years, and as volunteer Medical Director and Board Member of the American Red Cross Blood Bank for many of those.

Henry's professional life did not cease with his

retirement from Wilmington Pathology Associates in 1996.

Retirement did not suit him, so in 1998 he became Director of laboratories at Person Memorial Hospital in Roxboro, NC. This was interrupted in 2002 when he fell from a ladder and was rendered paraplegic. He was hospitalized for three months at Duke University Medical Center and through intense rehab and sheer determination, augmented by Margery's constant encouragement, he taught himself to walk again.

His injury forced his retirement after which he returned to Wilmington. We saw him regularly at functions of the county medical society. He and his wife Margery frequently entertained in their lovely waterway home. He loved the proximity of water and his boat.

Our Henry was an irascible fellow, often arguing issues of importance, or of less obvious value, but never compromising in his role as a health care provider to patients who usually never met their pathologist. He made their surgical tissue diagnoses, supervised their laboratory testing, and supported their primary physicians in their medical practices. To us, his partners, he was endeared as a constant friend and colleague. He was valued for what he knew and was most willing to pass on to us whether we felt the need for his advice or not.

I'll leave you with a boat story that reflects his subtle humor. He and his long-time work partner Ralph McCoy owned a sailboat together early on. Henry took his kids on an outing offshore where the rudder broke requiring a Coast Guard rescue. When he was asked for the boat's registration card he produced it, bearing the name in which it was registered, Ralph McCoy. He bothered not to mention that this was not his name, allowing Ralph to carry the lasting distinction of having been rescued at sea by the Coast Guard. So it was with Henry, always with a 'got you' twinkle and a familiar diminutive smile that made him memorable and enjoyable. I'm sure he carries that smile forward into his next adventure. We love you Henry. Life will not be as complete without you.