

Dr Delmar Ralph Aitken

May 17, 1947 - July 29, 2020

On the evening of July 29, 2020, Dr. Delmar Aitken of Redlands and Palm Springs CA, passed away at the age of 73 from COVID-19. Born on May 17th, 1947, Del was raised in Omaha, Nebraska by his parent's John and Evelina Aitken, and he had a half-brother, J.J. Aitken from his father's first marriage. Del attended Union College in Lincoln where he obtained his bachelor's degree before moving to California to attend Loma Linda University to study medicine.

While in medical school he met Cheree, the love of his life, and the two were married on June 18th, 1972. He graduated in 1973, two years later his first daughter, April Angelique, was born, and three years after that Andra Arlene joined the Aitken clan.

In 1981, Del was asked to join a research team at The Ohio State University to develop the standards for Sentinel Lymph Node Mapping and Biopsy using Radioactive Isotopes, now the gold-standard of care in breast cancer surgery. He returned to Loma Linda University Medical Center where he served as Faculty, furthered his surgical expertise, and with Cheree by his side, a registered nurse, they brought this gama detection technology to the Inland Empire.

Later in his career, Dr. Aitken went into private practice in the Inland Empire

and Palm Springs. Most recently Dr. Aitken provided in-home and hospice care. Throughout his career, Del cared for his patients deeply, adored mentoring new doctors, and as a man of faith, he believed that medicine was his way of being of service.

Delmar was gregarious, fun, and humorous striving to bring joy, laughter, and healing to others. After all, he often quipped, “laughter is the best medicine.” He loved connecting with people: his patients, his friends & colleagues, and mostly, his family. For over 48 years he was devoted to and twitterpated by his wife, Cheree, and loved the adventure of visiting his daughters, and deepening his relationship with his son-in-law, Ramiro Diaz. Del especially enjoyed the whole family being back together in California for sight-seeing in Palm Springs, Cuca’s on the dinner table, or a day at the happiest place on earth, Disneyland!

During lockdown, a favorite topic of conversation was where the family vacation would be post-Covid. From Disneyland to board games to going to movies—Del liked to play and have fun! Delmar is survived by his wife Cheree, his two daughters April Angelique Aitken and Andra Aitken-Diaz, his son-in-law, Ramiro Diaz, as well as three granddogs, Milne, Marquis, & BellaKiki.

A Zoom virtual memorial service will be held on September 2, 2020 at 5 pm PST. If you are interested in attending please contact Angelique and Andra at laughwithdel@gmail.com. A recording of the service will also be available to watch online.

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations could be made to any of the following.

The American Cancer Society

<https://www.cancer.org/involved/donate.html>

Redlands Community Hospital, COVID-19 Relief Fund

<https://www.redlandshospital.org/foundation/ways-to-give/donate-online/>

Gesundheit! Institute

<https://www.patchadams.org/>

Previous Events

Zoom Funeral Service

SEP 2. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (PT)

Zoom Funeral Service ONLINE

Tribute Wall

DL

“ When I developed stomach cancer in 1981 I had the privilege of meeting Dr Aiken at Loma Linda Medical Center when he became my surgeon! He was a caring and gentle person and I'm happy to say he saved my life! My surgery was successful and and I have lived a healthy life since then due to Dr. Aikens skill and expertise! I have thought of him many times over the years and asked God to send him blessings! I am very sorry to hear of his passing and send my deepest sympathies to his family , friends and patients. May he RIP! 🙏

Diand G. Letwinch - February 14, 2023 at 12:33 AM

MB

“ You never expect someone you knew and admired to leave this earth. I came across a letter of recommendation given to me by Dr. Aitken (November 15, 1988) and decided to look in Google to see how he is doing. I am saddened to read of his passing.

I became Dr. Aitken's medical assistant while working at the FMO Surgery Department [1980-1987]. We were a "team" for six years (his longest lasting medical assistant at that time). I learned many things from Dr. Aitken and will be forever grateful for his teachings and trust in me. I went on to become a Surgical Technologist due to his influence in surgery and specialized in 'General Surgery' early into my career.

Many years had passed since our last contact. But one day one of my surgical tech students was talking about this surgeon where they were doing their internship. I immediately knew who they were speaking of and asked the student to tell this "doctor" "hello from Marsha, his medical assistant". Dr. Aitken remembered me after 25 years later. He was an amazing and compassionate surgeon and loved to tell jokes while working together. He may have had an odd sense of humor, but that's what I liked about him.

I will always remember his professionalism towards myself, staff, and patients alike. Dr. Aitken was passionate towards his patients, especially ones who had cancer. Dr. Aitken trusted me with tasks that he would not with others. My only regret; we didn't get to work together in the Operating Room. That would have been a hoot!

I will miss and remember him fondly. My sympathies, as late as they are, go, to Mrs. Aitken, his two daughters, and his son in law.

"Happy Trails, Until We Meet Again"

Marsha L. Buchanan, CMA, CST, BSHCA

Marsha L Buchanan - September 04, 2021 at 08:58 PM

RJ


“ *Dr. Aitkens was my doctor for over 15 years. He was an amazing physician. He was an expert in his profession and I trusted his advice in treating me. I will truly miss him. He was one in a million.*
Rosalind Jones

Rosalind Jones - June 28, 2021 at 09:12 PM

FA

“ *Delmar, I spent Memorial Day thinking about you and I miss you. Thank you for our 14 year friendship. Frank Arian, MD (please contact me Cheree)*

frank arian - June 02, 2021 at 11:59 AM

 Frank
Arian

“ *Part Two: All of us can only hope to achieve and be the person and man that my buddy Dr. Delmar Aitken had become. He was generous, caring, resilient, tough, gentle, educated, worldly, logical, practical, skilled, a good teacher, good student, curious, engaged and even fun... yes fun..... So let me say in closing with the heaviest of hearts as I say here publicly my goodbye to my best buddy in Palm Springs that I loved Dr. Delmar Aitken and am proud to call him my eternal friend and mentor and that I will so miss him and can only hope his wife Cheree will contact me so I can stay in contact with his family. He was very special and I can only imagine the loss they must feel. Rest in peace Doctor. Your shift is over. You have finally been called up to that final callroom where you get your confirmation of a lifetime of job well done and a place to rest that is special and reserved for those giants amongst us. I hope to see you there if I can be worthy. Goodbye Del and thank you.....Frank Arian, MD*

Frank Arian - March 26, 2021 at 10:50 AM

 Frank
Arian

“ I have been wondering where my old buddy has been and finally took to the airways yesterday to find him. And i ran across this. And my heart sank a thousand feet deep. And I said Oh No Not Him Lord... And I cried..... I loved Del Aitken. He was my colleague, my doctor and my friend. In 2007 he came into my new practice Victory Physicians across the street from DRMC where he was a general surgeon. He wanted to meet me and expand his referral pool. And we met and we hit it off. He was a quiet and reserved guy like I would expect in a surgeon unlike myself the exact opposite as a family doc. I took him on as my primary referral source and referred to him until his practice closed. Over the years he took every case I sent him. He took the toughest cases never refusing anything. He wasnt afraid of hard work, struggle and even failure. Unlike so many surgeons I know who cherry pick the biscuits and leave the tough stuff for the real hardy surgeons, Del took em all. I heard about a case where a man with a 75 pound scrotum required surgery and required both urologic and general surgery attendings. I didnt have to ask to know what general surgeon would be attending. I knew it was my friend Del. They had to hoist the scrotum with a crane. And of course there was Del. He took the toughest of the tough. Those hair raising cases that would last for hours and cover a surgeon in sweat where from opening to closing every minute was a hair raising fight to complete the surgery and fix the patient. Delmar Aitken had more guts than any surgeon I know. I came to know him late in life and late in his professional career. I on the other hand was young in my private family practice and Del always took an active interest in how I was doing. He checked in regularly and we would sit for an hour and talk about things....., talk about how his practice was doing, his wonderful wife Cheree and family and my practice. We exchanged strategies for small practice survival and commiserated over Obamacare rules and charting etc. We discussed billing and changes and other challenges small medical practices face. He was always asking how I was, watching my weight like a mother, and gave a damn about me. Now I dont have many people like that left and he sure made a difference in making me feel cared for and a part of the medical community. Late in his

career as hard times came and he transitioned to another phase of his practice, I was the one he would come to and ask for advice and explore his options. For a young doc like myself I was honored that my opinion and level headed approach to solving problems was one that he admired and utilized. We found time to go to dinner together and what a thrill it was to break bread with his wife Cheree and him at Johnny Costas Italian Restaurant in Palm Springs. We had a fabulous time and he told me it became one of their favorite go to's in later days. We had tried to book a dinner not long before his death but covid made a mess of that and we had to cancel. I know that he was looking forward to retirement and new realities required him to work. I encouraged he keep working to some degree to stay sharp. But I know he was tired. His run as an active physician simply amazes me. Receiving his MD in 1973 after enrolling in 1969 he was active for 47 years. That simply drops my jaw. I imagine everything he had seen and all the huge differences he made in the thousands upon thousands upon thousands of patients he had seen in his career. And finally, in the end, was on duty, still seeing patients and doing good for humanity when he was struck down in the early phase of covid before it was crystal clear just how bad this bug was. There is no greater honor than to be struck down in the field of duty in the service of your fellow man and country. God bless Delmar.

Frank Arian - March 26, 2021 at 10:35 AM

JD

“ I worked with Dr. Delmar Aitken while at the Desert Regional Medical Center from 2007-2011. He was one of the nicest and easiest consultants to work with and was always willing to lend a hand even when he wasn't on call. I'm saddened to learn of his passing today, but know we will once again see him in heaven. He was a man of God and always put others needs ahead of his own, and an amazing physician and an even better man.

*Jeff Davies, DO, MPH, FACOEP
Emergency Medicine*

Jeff Davies - October 01, 2020 at 10:37 PM

HH

“ I was saddened to hear of Dr. Aitken's passing. He was such a kind and warm hearted man. He definitely had a love for his patients and the medical field. He was a highly respected member of our team. I know my triage team miss his nightly calls and his eagerness to help our patient's.

My thoughts and prayers are with Mrs Aitken and the rest of the Aitken family during this difficult time.

The world has lost quite a man in Dr. Delmar Aitken, but I can guarantee you, that Heaven has never been the same! :o)

Heather Harris, RN- Charter Health Care Group



Heather Harris - September 16, 2020 at 08:10 PM

YA

“ I translated for Dr Aitken a handful of times with his Spanish speaking patients for Charter, he struck me as a compassionate and caring doctor, he got to know his patients one on one and he surprised me at how easy going and thoughtful he was with each question he asked his patients. He was the kind of doctor nurses loved calling and talking to! No impatient grumble or mean tone, I could hear the smile in his voice every time. I worked with him such a short time yet it broke my heart to hear he passed away. God bless him and his family who instead of flowers asked for donations in his name. My donation in his name was sent to the American cancer society. My deepest condolences to Cheree, his daughters and family. I hope you find comfort in knowing he touched many lives while on this earth. May he Rest In Peace. -Yaneth S.

Yaneth - September 16, 2020 at 07:56 PM

Jl

“ Janet Ihde purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Dr Delmar Ralph Aitken.



Janet Ihde - September 08, 2020 at 07:39 PM

DR

“ *Delmar was a five year younger than me cousin. His mom, Aunt Evalina, was full of life and a fun person which Delmar inherited from her. I never lived close to Delmar except for a few years when I lived in Redlands, so I was not that close to him geographically, but I did feel a close connection. I loved his sense of humor and appreciated his zest for life and his continual interest in what others were up to and what was going in their lives. He was a very dedicated family man and a dedicated physician. My condolences to his family. Love to all of you, Diana Roberts*

Diana Roberts - September 07, 2020 at 11:43 PM

LD

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Linda Dunn - September 03, 2020 at 02:41 AM

KC

“*Delmar was always full of fun and adventure. We were roommates in the old Daniells Hall the first two years of medical school at Loma Linda. He was a brilliant student and an extrovert. I value my time with him. My grandfather, H. K. Christman, was widely known for his polysyllabic vocabulary. When Delmar met H.K.'s grand daughter Cheree (my cousin), he needed a word to describe her. So, he found the word "pulchritude", and liked to say that Cheree was "full of pulchritude", which, of course, means "beautiful". So, Delmar transitioned from my roommate to Cheree's roommate after two years of medical school, and he became a lifelong treasured family member and friend. He once honored me by telling me that I was his "best friend", and I was elated. Delmar brought a lot of happiness to whoever crossed his path, and I am grateful that I was in the middle of his path. I will miss him.*

Ken Christman

Ken Christman - September 02, 2020 at 10:31 PM

RH

“*Delmar and I were residents in General Surgery together in the late '70's. He was a year ahead of me. He was gracious as a teacher/mentor. He was a tireless worker who never lost sight of his goal to give the best care for the patients. I fee very fortunate to have known him. I ache for the family for their loss of had such a joy of life*

Roger and Donna Hadley - September 02, 2020 at 09:46 PM

GC

“ Delmar was always available and so kind to the Bob Christman family. He never seemed to mind that every time there was a medical issue that we would either call him, go over to their house or ask them to come to ours to get “free” medical advice. He was always very kind and he had a sense of humor. He will be missed. Love you Delmar.



Glenda Christman - September 02, 2020 at 02:16 PM



“ My memories of Delmar always revolve around family gatherings; many times we would gather for a big Sabbath picnic and spend hours together. After a fabulous meal there would be hours of visiting. I remember at least at one picnic where Delmar was on the ground with his eyes close; but he was not sleeping! He was fully engaged in conversation with the men seated around him. He was, as I remember, one who enjoyed asking questions and trying to find out what was going on in the world of those around him. I liked that quality about him!

I am including two pictures to show the cousins on these special days.



Ellen Christman - September 02, 2020 at 01:31 PM

AN

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



angeliqueaitken - August 27, 2020 at 02:51 AM

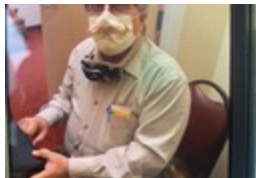
ES

“ My sincere condolences to the family. I worked closely with Dr. Aitken a number of years ago when he first came to the Coachella Valley. He was always kind and humble. He will be missed.

Ember Schmidt - August 15, 2020 at 05:27 PM

FG

“ I worked closely with Dr. Aitken over the past year. It was very hard to hear of his passing. I always enjoyed hearing his jokes, and him speaking of his family. I have so many great memories of him. He will be dearly missed at work. My prayers go out to his wife and children. Sincerely, Faith



faith gonzales - August 15, 2020 at 12:24 PM



“ Delmar was our neighbor, always friendly and interested in what we were up to. We will miss him very much. I have no doubt he was a very caring physician. Our deepest condolences to Cheree and family. Linda Richards and Tom Gillett

Linda Richards - August 14, 2020 at 02:24 AM

JI

“ *I am very sad to hear about Delmar. He was a good person who really cared about his patients. He always talked about his wife and daughters, and I know that you all were very close. If I can do anything for you. let me know. Janet Ihde*

Janet Ihde - August 07, 2020 at 07:42 PM

TP

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Timothy Tyler, PharmD - August 06, 2020 at 11:51 AM