



Richard "Dick" Schaefer

July 3, 1941 - October 23, 2021

An important lifelong communicator and champion for Loma Linda University Health, Loma Linda City News as well as the Loma Linda community, recently passed away. Richard "Dick" Schaefer, who devoted more than 50 years to serving the organization and community as an important voice to the world, finally succumbed to leukemia on Saturday, October 23, 2021. A private memorial service will be held on November 26, 2021.

Born as a twin at Loma Linda Sanitarium and Hospital on July 3, 1941, Schaefer was 80 when he passed. He was preceded in death by his twin brother, Robert "Bob" Schaefer, who passed away on December 30, 2016. First diagnosed with a form of leukemia in 2019, he bravely fought the disease, continuing—if not increasing—his prolific research and writing.

In 1984, Schaefer was an integral part of a defining moment for Loma Linda University Health. The world first descended upon the sleepy town of Loma Linda, surrounded by orange groves and livestock, all because of a tiny infant who garnered international attention. Stephanie Fae Beauclair—known to the world only as "Baby Fae" for family privacy—was born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome.

This was a death sentence for every infant before her. Baby Fae received the first-ever successful infant heart transplant from a baboon donor and lived for

a record three weeks after her historic transplant. Schaefer took a leading role in telling the story of Leonard Bailey, MD, pioneer of infant heart transplantation, and the little girl he tried so hard to save.

As news spread of the historic transplant, Schaefer and his communication colleagues at LLUH were inundated with hundreds of calls from both national and international media. On a number of occasions, he provided news updates—sometimes on camera—to major television networks, as well as hundreds of other media organizations.

“That was baptism by fire,” Schaefer commented about the experience during an interview with Darrell R. Santschi of the Press-Enterprise in 2012. “We were used to dealing with the news media 1,000 times a year, just giving patient condition reports and working on human interest stories. But when Baby Fae happened, that [number] went to 1,500 times a day.”

Baby Fae catapulted Loma Linda University Health into the world spotlight for the first time. Schaefer served as an accurate and reliable source of information for the organization on many occasions, and later as lead historian for the institution until his recent passing.

Earning a bachelor’s degree in communication from La Sierra College in 1966 (now La Sierra University, Riverside, California), Schaefer had already served as a representative in Southern Mexico and Central America for International Educational Recordings, headquartered in Malibu.

That same year, he became assistant to the director of university relations, precursor to the LLUH office of public relations. Two years later, in 1968, he was named community relations officer, representing Loma Linda University Medical Center.

In 1976, Schaefer was asked to head the LLUH office of community relations, the healthcare counterpart to university relations on campus. Beginning in 2000, he was tasked with singlehandedly researching and writing the history of Loma Linda University Health.

Over many years, Schaefer became the consummate historian for LLUH, writing books and other publications, including: *Legacy*, focusing on the heritage and history of Loma Linda University Medical Center; *On Becoming Shryock*, a biography of one of Loma Linda University's founding pioneers, Harold Shryock, MD; *Service is Our Calling*, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the LLU School of Dentistry; *A Century of Caring*, covering the history of the LLU School of Nursing for its 100th anniversary; *Glory of the Vision* books 1 and 2, detailing 100 years of the LLU School of Medicine upon its centennial celebration; *Glory of the Vision—Unabridged*, a five-volume history of Loma Linda University Health (volume 1 is in print); *Embracing the Vision: The Journey of a Century and Of the Highest Order*—both for the School of Medicine's 100th anniversary; *A Heritage of Excellence*, containing 11 biographical sketches of iconic individuals in the School of Medicine; *Protons: A Beam of Hope*, providing a biographical look at proton radiation pioneer James Slater, MD, as well as the LLU Proton Treatment and Research Center; and a publication honoring Sir Run Run Shaw Hospital's 20th anniversary.

Schaefer recently wrote and published the book, *Creation: "Behold, it was Very Good,"* citing close to 1,000 scientists and commentators on both sides regarding evolution and creation. This book capped a lifelong interest in comparing the biblical account of creation with the theory of evolution.

His professional contributions reached beyond LLUH. Schaefer served on the Board of Directors for Arrowhead United Way and United Way of the East

Valley for a decade. In Forest Falls, where he was a resident for many years, he served on the Board of Directors for the Forest Park Mutual Water Company for three years, as well as commissioner for the Forest Falls Fire Protection District for two decades. From 2008 to 2010, he was president of the Loma Linda Chamber of Commerce, as well as commissioner of the City of Loma Linda Historical Commission beginning in 2008.

In 1987, he received the President's Citation from the Public Relations Society of America. Loma Linda University recognized him in 2010 with the Distinguished University Service Award. Just two years later, in 2012, he was named Loma Linda Citizen of the Year by the Loma Linda Chamber of Commerce.

Many did not realize that Dick was an identical twin. It was difficult to distinguish between the two, and often times Bob would patiently listen while unsuspecting individuals conversed about LLUH happenings and information, then calmly inform them (with a twinkle in his eye) that they likely thought they were talking to his brother.

Surviving family members include his father, Robert A. Schaefer, Sr.; former wife, Margie Schaefer Imthurn; three sons—Mark Alan, Jonathan Andrew, and Jeffrey Todd Schaefer; Jonathan's wife, Theresa; three grandsons; and one great-grandson.

Schaefer thoroughly enjoyed researching and writing the history of Loma Linda University Health, which he called "a special place on earth." "Sometimes, in the quiet of my office in the Del E. Webb Memorial Library," he shared during a 2020 interview with Margie Miller, writer and editor for Loma Linda City News, "I find myself laughing out loud—and sometimes, reaching for a box of tissues."