

DR. JOHN WILLIAM GLOTFELTY

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September 28, 1928 - February 23, 2017

LAKELAND - Dr. John William Glotfelty, 88, died peacefully on February 23, 2017, after a short illness. He was the son of Galen Floyd Glotfelty and Mary Susan Boley. John was born September 28, 1928, in Des Moines Township, Jefferson County, Iowa. He grew up on farms in the Batavia and Libertyville area, outside of Fairfield, Iowa. His parents and extended family had lived in the area since their ancestors began settling in the area in the early 1840s. Though 'cash poor,' they had strong bonds with relatives and friends in the community and in the Central Christian Brethren, where his grandfather was a minister.

John's upbringing on the farm instilled in him the characteristics he displayed throughout his life: smart, determined, generous, practical and pragmatic, stoic (to a fault, sometimes), and good humored, usually in a mischievous way. At the time he could walk, it was John's job to gather eggs and feed the chickens. Even as a small boy, he had work to do. He'd sit on the sloping roof of the chicken house with a broom to keep birds away from dried corn laid out on the roof. In the family's vegetable garden, his mother would make the rows, John would drop the seeds, and his older brother would cover them up. The boys kept weeds out of the garden. John helped snap the beans and shell the peas. He helped take the corn, peas, and beans down into jars in the cold-packing process. When reminiscing, John recalled that the first greens in the spring were dandelion greens. He loved them. His mother would use bacon grease, heat it, and pop the greens, which would make them limp. She never grew head lettuce - only leaf lettuce. John didn't even know what a head of lettuce was until he was much older. As he grew, his responsibilities grew. Though he eventually left the farm, he never left the man.

After attending several one-room school houses in Des Moines Township, John moved into Fairfield to attend Fairfield High School, which he completed in three years, graduating in 1945. He went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree from Fairfield's Parsons College in 1948. He excelled in school, but it was never his sole occupation. When not helping on the farm, he worked. As he grew up, his employers included Leber's Department Store, Brown Lynch Scott Retail, the Fairfield Theater, Co-Ed Theater. However, it was as a photographer that he generated enough earnings to help pay for his education. He was a photographer for his high school, for the Centennial Edition of the Fairfield Ledger, and for many years taking pictures of everything from weddings to babies to local news events.

Because he was too young to be admitted to Medical School in 1948, he studied Biochemistry and Physiology at the State University of Iowa in Iowa City for a few semesters. In 1949, he was admitted to the University of Louisville School of Medicine. Graduating in 1953, he ranked first in his class all four years.

He began his career as a physician as an intern with the U.S. Public Health Service. His service included a stint with the U.S. Coast Guard Icebreaker 'Northwind,' during which one of his pictures from Point Barrow, Alaska, of a 'blank' ice field was published in a Britannica Encyclopedia Year Book. He completed his PHS Residency in Eye, Ears, Nose, and Throat in 1961, became a Board-certified Ophthalmologist, and entered private practice with the Lakeland Eye Clinic in 1961. He was a highly respected physician and surgeon, practicing until August 2004. His patients would express their appreciation in ways large and small throughout the years. He returned their devotion by always making himself available to answer a question or check someone's eyes - even using some equipment he kept at home.

Before heading off to medical school, John married Bonnie Jeanne Dunnuck of Fairfield in May 1949. She was his life and his partner in building his career and in raising their six children. They were family-centered, and ensured their children knew how to enjoy themselves as well as to grow into responsible citizens. They also loved to travel and give their children opportunities to see faraway places, including Tunisia, parts of Europe, China, and Russia, as well as different parts of the United States. They also hosted numerous professionals and students visiting from other countries. Some of those visitors became lifelong friends of the family.

John was in the Iowa National Guard during college and joined the Florida National Guard (Medical) in 1980, retiring as Colonel in 1992. He was widely recognized for his contributions and achievements. Among his military awards are the Distinguished Service Medal (1990), Army Commendation and Achievement Medals, and The Legion of Merit (1991). John was an Officer and/or Board Member of most of the medical-related professional associations of which he was a member, including President of the Florida Society of Ophthalmology (1975-76). He was appointed to the Florida Board of Ophthalmology in 1991 by then-Governor Lawton Chiles, and served in that capacity until 2001. He was also active in representing medical issues and concerns to officials in the Federal and State governments.

After his retirement, John continued to work as a volunteer physician for both the Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine and the Polk County Health Department. Though once recognized as Volunteer of the Year, he was regularly recognized for his ongoing and lasting contributions to the community.

John and Bonnie were not just pillars of their community and wonderful parents to their children. They were also wonderful and devoted children to their parents. Both their parents moved from Iowa to Florida and lived in home. Throughout their older years, John and Bonnie made them beloved parts of the extended family, and as needed, aid and comfort. They provided a tremendous example.

John had a wide range of interests, but chief among them was his sentimental attachment to his roots in Iowa and a belief in the importance of preserving history for future generations. His initiative, drive, and financial support are reasons that the Des Moines School #1 was rehabilitated and is open for visits by school children, and the Church of the Brethren in Libertyville, the oldest active church west of the Mississippi River, was rehabilitated. He took great pride in the completion of these projects, as well as in being honored by inclusion in the Parson's College Wall of Honor in 2002. John was preceded in death by his wife Bonnie and his brother Wayne. He is survived by his six children, fourteen grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. His children: John David (Carmen Ortiz) of Kissimmee, FL, Robert (Barbara Rajchel) of Springfield, VA, Emma Jeanne (Mark Randall) of St. Charles, MO, Michael James (Tammy) and William Randolph (Karla Feucht) of Lakeland, FL, and Edward Neil (Kelly McKee) of Mechanicsburg, PA. His grandchildren: Thaddeus John Glotfelty (Lila Gollogly), John David Glotfelty (Jenny Dillingham), Laura Jeanne (Joel Ensey), Carmen Susan Glotfelty, Derek Randall (Rebecca Weaver), Stephanie Glotfelty, David Phillip Rankin (Whitney Burrows), Bonnie Ann Glotfelty, Olivia Ashlyn Glotfelty, Jacob Paul Glotfelty, Schuyler Neil Glotfelty, Chase Scott Glotfelty, Miranda Elizabeth Glotfelty, and BreAnne Glotfelty.

A viewing will be held at Heath Funeral Chapel and Cemetery, 328 S. Ingraham Avenue, Lakeland, Florida, 33801, Sunday, February 26, from 4 to 6 pm. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be sent to VISTE of Lakeland, Libertyville Church of the Brethren, 1425 230 St., Batavia, IA 52533-7527.

A private burial service will be held at the Church of the Brethren in Libertyville, followed by interment at the Brethren Cemetery (Dunkard), where all John's ancestors have been buried since Michael Glotfelty moved to Jefferson County in 1843.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.heathfuneralchapel.com.



Funeral Home

Heath Funeral Chapel

328 South Ingraham Avenue Lakeland, FL 33801
(863) 682-0111

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