



Dr. Delmar Ray "Del" Caldwell

OCT 29, 1935 - MAR 18, 2024



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Dr. Delmar Ray Caldwell "Del" went peacefully to be with the Lord on Monday, March 18, 2024. He was born on October 29, 1935 in Thomas, Oklahoma to the late John William Caldwell and Ada Gertrude Deickman Caldwell, originally from Watertown, Buffalo County, Nebraska.

Delmar was the beloved life-long partner of Jo Ann Thompson for 38 years. He was the loving father of Delmar Caldwell, Jr. (Mary Lee), William Mark Caldwell, MD, and Samantha McShane (Brady). He was the proud grandfather of Lindsay Marie Moragas (Ryan), Chelsea Amy Caldwell, Grant Thomas Caldwell (Clare), Sophie Ann McShane, and Kate Ryan McShane; great-grandfather of Rutherford Joseph and Miriam Charlotte Caldwell.

During the years with his life partner, he mentored and helped Jo Ann raise her nephew Kelton Thompson, and her younger brother Dylan. He was a beloved member of their extended families.

Dr. Caldwell was an extraordinary man, truly one of a kind. While impossible to fully capture the story of his remarkable life in words, it probably can best be described as a real-life example of the "American Dream".

Dr. Caldwell began his life the youngest of six boys, living with his parents and brothers in a four room cabin "on a dirt farm" in Western Oklahoma. There was no electricity or running water and even less food. Both parents were gone by the age of 9 and he was passed from older brothers, family members, and foster care. By the eighth grade, (age 13), he was on his own. This was the humble beginnings of a young man with the grit and tenacity and will to not only survive but to overcome every obstacle and fulfill his every dream! Work ethic, great grades, and ketchup soup kept him afloat. After high school, he played AAA baseball for the Washington Senators to make money for college. Sports, football to be precise, gave him a four year full ride scholarship to the



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University of Oklahoma where he went to med school. From there he went to Baylor University in Texas for his residency. Later, he specialized in Ophthalmology at Harvard in Boston.

Dr. Caldwell's life story is a remarkable, almost unbelievable one, and yet, it was very rarely shared. His life was about helping others, which leads us to the most important component of his miraculous life. Fulfilling his dream and in doing so, fulfilling so many others by giving the gift of sight.

Dr. Caldwell served as a professor and the Chairmen of the Ophthalmology department at Tulane University for more than 40 years. During that time, he trained nearly 300 ophthalmology residents, invented an artificial cornea, and lectured around the world. He was engaged by large-scale medical centers around the globe as a consultant and was sought out to perform eye surgery on world leaders and dignitaries. The work that he found most fulfilling, however, were the numerous mission trips that he organized and led outside of the United States to provide free medical services to underserved communities in Central and South America. People would line up for miles, sleeping on the side of the road, in the hopes of being seen by Dr. Caldwell and his traveling medical team.

Dr. Caldwell's medical practice touched countless people over half a century - in fact, he had a full surgery schedule when he fell ill in February 2024 at the age of 88. When his patients were notified that Dr. Caldwell was admitted to the hospital and unable to perform their scheduled procedures, they all responded that they would prefer to wait until he got back to the office, rather than rescheduling with another eye surgeon. He was a pioneer in his field and endlessly dedicated to sharing his gift to help others. Though he could have retired from practice at any time, he continued because he was doing what he loved. When asked about it, he would say as long as God allows me, I will continue. If I can help give sight to someone who has lost it, "HOW COULD I SAY NO"?

For those of you that have inquired about honoring Dr. Caldwell: The DELMAR R. CALDWELL MEMORIAL CORNEA CANCER RESEARCH has been established with Resource Bank Attention: Juanita Barbaro 985-801-1888, 70533 Hwy. 21, Covington, La. 70433. *Please make checks payable to - Delmar R. Caldwell Memorial Cornea Cancer Research.

E. J. Fielding Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements. Please sign the online guestbook at www.ejfieldingfh.com.



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SJ

Susan G Joffrion posted:

Dr Caldwell was such an intelligent, caring, friendly, fantastic person and surgeon. My mom was referred to Dr. Caldwell in the late 70's , He worked so hard with my moms eyes. She had terrible issues with glaucoma etc. Multiple surgeries for cataracts, cryo treatment, corneal transplants. You name it, he did it for her. Always great results. He was a fighter, he never gave up helping her in any possible way he could. She was a patient of his until 2003 when she broke her hip and was placed in a nursing home in Slidell. Dr. Caldwell was so wonderful, he had one of his nurses that lived in Slidell come by to see my mom to check her eye pressure on a regular basis. I know she was disappointed that she couldn't visit him for her checkups, she really liked his friendly, caring manner. Mom has since passed so I know they are talking over the old times at Tulane Ophthalmology. He will be missed by so many people.

May 22 at 10:53 AM

MM

Majd M. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Delmar.



March 29 at 9:23 AM



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SD

Susan F. Dennis posted:

It was an honor to work with this amazing man. He will always be in my thoughts and prayers. ❤️

March 27 at 4:49 AM

TC

Tatiana Lee-Chee April 14 at 5:26 AM

Dr. Caldwell was one of the most influential people in my life. I'm full of gratitude for everything he taught me in my career and in life. He was both a mentor and a father figure. He contributed so much to ophthalmology and made it better for the world. He will be missed immensely. May he rest in peace. My sincere sympathy for his loved ones. He truly loved his family above all.

PP

Peggy Pitman April 5 at 8:12 AM

Such a loss. This great Physician will be missed by all his patients. He was always so kind and took his time when you had an appointment with him. My family were his patients for many many years. Rest in Peace Dr. Caldwell- Job well done. Sincere sympathy to his entire family, and his staff (most especially Jean) .

DC

Donna Cazaubon April 3 at 7:24 AM

Jo Ann Thompson, I am just seeing your loss, so so sorry Jo Ann, he must have been a wonderful man and I'm sure he will be missed. Donna Cazaubon

OS

Oscar P. Sill March 31 at 5:11 AM

He saved my sight - R.I.P. Doc!



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Delmar by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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