

Martin A Shearn, MD

1923-2002

By Arthur L Klatsky, MD,
Associate Editor, Clinical Contributions

One of the most distinguished and creative physicians of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program (KPMCP), Dr Martin Shearn played a major role at the Oakland facility starting in 1955. He developed the first KP House Staff Training Program (Residency), which flourished under his direction for the next 25 years. Many of the hundreds of physicians it graduated became Staff Physicians in the KPMCP. He served as Chief of Medicine at Oakland for four years, from 1982 until his retirement in 1986, during which he instituted a Personal Physician program that was later adopted program wide. He authored or coauthored more than 80 articles or book chapters, regarding disseminated lupus erythematosus or Sjogren's syndrome—subjects on which he was known internationally as an expert. Other (usually in collaboration with his wife Lori) concerned topics of medical historical interest, with titles such as “Madame de Pompadour—Impaired Courtesan” and “Doctor Joseph Guillotin—Saint or Villain?” A partial list of his honors includes several elections as an outstanding teacher at KP Oakland and University of California hospitals; honorary Brazilian citizenship (awarded during a year of service as Chief of Staff of the

USS Hope); selection as a Distinguished Practitioner of Medicine of the National Academies of Practice; and the respect and affection of thousands of colleagues, students, and patients who benefited from his knowledge and wit.

A graduate of Ohio University and New York Medical College, Dr Shearn trained at Bellevue Hospital in New York, where he practiced and taught for several years. He did a Cardiology Fellowship at Stanford University Medical Center. He was a Fellow of the American College of Physicians. He married Lori in 1951; they have three children and five grandchildren. Two of their three children (David, Director of Physician Education and Development at Oakland, and Wendy, an Internist at Terra Linda) are KP Physicians; the third (Bobbi) teaches music. Dr Shearn died September 23, 2002, several weeks after the “Living with Alzheimer’s” article (page 38) was written. ❖

