

Dr. Grant Moy

August 28, 1917 - January 24, 2021

Dr. Grant G. Moy of San Francisco, California, died peacefully at the home of his daughter on January 24th. He was 103 years old. Dr. Moy was an accomplished surgeon, family man, Army veteran, and Congressional Gold Medal honoree. He was also an expert dice and cards bluffer and all-around life of the party.

Born at home in a small Chicago apartment in 1917, Dr. Moy was the third of seven children born to Moy Dong Hoy and Gee Shee, who both hailed from Toisan in southern China. His father is widely recognized as one of the founders of Chicago's Chinatown.

Throughout his long life, Dr. Moy frequently extolled hard work and persistence and credited these virtues with his academic and professional achievements. He worked through high school, college, and medical school—busing and waiting tables in long shifts at a Chinese restaurant, preparing cadavers for dissection by other students, and assisting professors in labs and classrooms. He blazed trails in the 1940s as a medical resident and young Army doctor during World War II, despite the racial prejudice and glass ceilings he encountered.

After his Army years, Dr. Moy relocated with his family to California, having heard that there was less anti-Chinese sentiment on the West Coast, and in 1952 became one of the first two Chinese Americans in the state ever to receive American Board certification in General Surgery. He set up a practice in San Francisco, where he served the community for some five decades. During his impressive medical career, Dr. Moy helped establish the Chinese Community Health Care Association, worked with others to build the medical office building at 890 Jackson Street, and served on the Board of Directors of the Chinese Hospital. At the same time, he taught for many years at the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine.

Dr. Moy finally retired from surgery in his 80s. Never one to let grass grow under his feet, however, Dr. Moy didn't stop working—instead, he shifted his focus to writing his memoirs, which he toiled over for six years and shared with his children in 2012.

He took great pride in his family. At a dinner and dance at Chicago's Sherman Hotel in 1938, he fell in love with his future wife, Betty Lee, who was 16 and wore a gardenia in her hair. In his memoirs he fondly recalled their dating days, when Betty would climb up and sit on the handlebars of his bicycle so they could travel the streets of Chicago together. They dated for five years, waiting to



marry until after he graduated from medical school in 1943. Eventually they bore and raised five children together, who remember their childhood happily and remain close to one another. Extended family, as well, recall Dr. Moy's warmth in rich memories of outings to baseball games, boisterous dinners and reunions, and an outpouring of affection for babies and children, whom he adored.

Dr. Moy also was a loyal and devoted friend. Even during his final years, he held dear the memories of friends long passed, while continuing effortlessly to forge new friendships with individuals of widely varied backgrounds and ages. He did this with his easy laugh and playfulness, unwavering curiosity about people and the world, and rare ability—even into the twilight of his life—to approach new or different people and ideas with an open and elastic mind.

In addition to charming everyone he met, Dr. Moy had an uncanny ability to bring people together. He was always up for a party. He could engage a crowd with a spur-of-the-moment liar's dice or poker game, a frolic on the dance floor, conversation around the dinner table, or, occasionally, a captivating (and sometimes raunchy) story punctuated with toothy grins and infectious laughter.

Dr. Moy touched countless lives and was a hero and role model to many. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him. He is survived by his brother, Eugene; five children, Grant Jr. (Peggy), Richard (Patti), Mary K. (Bill), Lisa, and Michele (Kevin); nine grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by Betty, his beloved wife of 72 years.

The Moy family will hold a Catholic Memorial Mass and spirited celebration worthy of honoring such an extraordinary person when such gatherings are safe. In the meantime they ask that, in lieu of flowers, friends and family raise a glass in private memory to Dr. Moy and, if so inclined, make a memorial donation to Chinese Hospital at www.chinesehospital-sf.org. Read more, view a gallery of photos, and send a note to the family at www.doctormoymemorial.com.

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