



## **Mark H Davis, M.D.**

### **1952 - 2020**

*A Tribute to Mark  
by Kelly Kinsley, M.D.*

Mark Davis, you were giant of a man and I'm not just referring to your physical stature, it was your heart. You cared about patients, your hospital and about medicine. You cared about your community, your staff, your friends and most deeply, your family.

When I moved to Crescent City in 1994 after completing my Family Practice Residency, Mark had a way of making me feel at home in the hospital and community. He would always have a helpful word or sound advise to share. At the time it felt like he had been in Crescent City for eons with all the wisdom he shared but I was amazed to discover he had only arrived the year before I did.

While I left Crescent City two years later Mark continued on and established himself as a well respected physician and skilled surgeon, an involved supportive member of the medical staff, and a philanthropic community leader. When I returned to the North Coast more than ten years later Mark and I reconnected and I discovered the same caring man. He had a passion for the practice of medicine, wanting to preserve the autonomy of physicians to serve their patients free of the self interest of corporate interference. Mark had given countless hours to the local Independent Physicians Association, the Humboldt / Del Norte Medical Society and the California Medical Association as a patient and physician advocate.

Greg Duncan, M.D. a long time colleague and friend said, "Mark Davis did more for physician and patient advocacy than anyone I have known. He was a man ahead of his time. He saw the oncoming assault on the practice of medicine long before the rest of us did. Mark never wavered from the principle that patient care decisions must remain with caregivers. He educated our medical staff on state law which bars the corporate practice of medicine and provides for physician self governance. Mark did all of this while raising a family and running a solo practice in a medically underserved area, and still finding the time to establish a charity which saved the local public swimming pool from closing."

Doctors Donna Sund-Caldwell and Kevin Caldwell who were very close to Mark and his family said, "The loss of Mark Davis was a significant blow to our entire family. We knew him for many years, primarily as a devoted family man. He was a very involved father to three talented children, who grew up as friends with our own three kids. He was an avid participant in our two-family scuba dive trips throughout the world, a proud grandfather to two little girls in Germany, and one dedicated to making sure everyone was happy and doing well within his own household."

Mark we will all miss your leadership and your friendship that all came from a giant heart that

cared. All the people you cared about will miss you, your patients, your community, your staff, your friends and most certainly your family.

Greg Duncan put it best when he said this about you Mark, "You cannot be replaced, and the example you set will continue to inspire the physicians you represented and the patients you treated."

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*as written by Luther F. Cobb, M.D.*

We've lost a true leader and a dear friend when Mark Davis died last month of an aggressive anaplastic thyroid carcinoma. It came as a surprise to him, but when he found out what he faced, he bore it with the grace, dignity and charm that characterized all his other roles in life and medicine. He had a really aggressive cancer operation at OHSU, with an experienced and talented crew who did all they could to conquer the disease. The initial very extensive total thyroidectomy and neck dissection revealed not only the advanced extent of the primary tumor, but also the many nodes involved. He sent me an intraoperative photo once he had recovered from the procedure, entitled "my poor neck", and I had to agree. It looked like an anatomic dissection. Amazingly, he had little if any postoperative dysfunction, including no effect on his beautiful, musical voice. We all held out hope that would take care of the problem, but anaplastic thyroid cancer is a truly nasty disease, and true to form, it recurred soon after, including CNS metastases for which he underwent extensive "gamma knife" radiosurgery. Throughout the complications, he maintained a positive attitude, until it was clear that the tumor would have the final say in the matter.

I spoke with him only a few days before his death, and despite his advanced disease, he was still the same pragmatic, even cheerful man I had known for over 20 years. He knew the end was near, yet he faced it with courage, even equanimity.

Mark was an amazing man, a gifted surgeon, a scholarly type without making a big deal of it. He was one of the few men I have known who could routinely wear a bow tie and not only not look silly, but look stylish, even fashionable. I never joked with him that he just did that to keep his tie out of the "splash zone" of his profession, and it's probably better that I didn't. (Although I think he would have laughed anyway....)

Urologists are a different breed. My wife has often said that in medicine, we don't choose the field, the field chooses us, and that was the way with Mark. Urology doesn't strike one as a romantic field, even though it deals with sex a lot, but it also deals with problems that people find vexatious, and often even embarrassing, like incontinence or sexual dysfunction. It also often deals with cancers that can be difficult to navigate in terms of options for treatment, and psychological as well as physical impact. It takes a special kind of empathetic physician to deal with those kind of problems, while also maintaining a sense of dignity, caring, and compassion that is the essence of a truly gifted healer. The field also has what to some is the very attractive combination of clinical medical practice, as well as surgical procedures. And many of those procedures require exquisite technical skills, which I have personally watched him deploy on

multiple occasions.

Mark got involved with the Medical Society and CMA soon after he arrived in Crescent City in 1994. He served as our Del Norte District Chair on the Medical Society Executive Board, representing our Del Norte members for over 17 years, serving on many local and statewide committees (Public Service and Medical Ethics Committee, Medical Quality Review Committee, Consortium Committee, CMA's Long Range Planning Committee, etc.) He was elected by the District X Delegation to be our Delegation Trustee on the CMA Board of Trustees in 2004 and served until terming out in 2012.

Mark served as Chief-of-Staff at Sutter Coast Hospital 2004-05 and on the Governing Board for both the Humboldt-Del Norte Foundation for Medical Care and Humboldt-Del Norte Independent Practice Association (1995-1998).

I first got to know Mark well when he was the Trustee for District Ten, our local District that at the time reached from the Oregon border to the Golden Gate Bridge. I had tried and failed to gain that spot previously, so I learned a lot from watching Mark at the District Delegation caucuses and the House of Delegates. Later as a Delegate, when I decided to throw my hat in the ring on a run for Vice Speaker, it was to Mark that I turned for advice. He graciously acceded to my request to be my campaign manager, despite requiring a lot of time and effort on his part with nothing other than gratitude and good will in exchange. In light of the fact that my victory in that race, (against my good friend and subsequent CMA President Dick Thorpe) was razor thin, I think that my subsequent ability to gain the role of Speaker, and later President, was in large part due to Mark's good offices and good advice. For that I will forever be grateful.

Mark left us way too soon and way too young, but he leaves a legacy that will be remembered by those of us in the Medical Society and CMA, as well as all the lives he touched, and his loved ones. I miss him sorely.