



IN MEMORIAM
DAVID S. GANS, M.D.
1939 - 2014

By Chris Lee, M.D.

David Gans died from longstanding medical problems on Labor Day 2014. David was raised in the Bay Area and attended college at UC Berkeley. He went to UCSF Medical School and graduated in 1965. He did his internship in internal medicine at San Francisco General and then medical residency and nephrology fellowship at USC and L.A. County Hospital. He said during those tumultuous times he never missed a sit-in and helped organize labor organizations at both county hospitals involving both house staff and other employees. He then began a practice of nephrology and general internal medicine in Los Angeles and subsequently in Beverly Hills. The story has it that he taught classes in emergency life support to the Black Panthers in the late 1960s.

According to his brother, Jonathan, when he settled down in his office practice in Beverly Hills he maintained a widely diverse patient population. There, young movie starlets might be seated next to a gang leader and, in turn, next to a screen writer all waiting to see David. I know they loved him because many of the mobile 1% would fly up to see him after he relocated to Arcata with Tara in 1994.

In addition to his Arcata and Mad River Community Hospital practice, he had many other diverse interests. He wrote verse and songs and performed as a vocalist with a band. He got interested in poker, and in addition to playing in the casinos for a period, he studied to teach it along with probability and chance as a class at HSU. His interest in the visual arts resulted in he and Tara being instrumental in developing the "Arts! Arcata" program.

David did whatever he could on behalf of his patients and relished fighting with the insurance companies. He wrote editorials and letters to the editor to detail his ideas of the way that medicine could be improved in the American medical system. His biggest concern was to maintain the essence of the profession that he so loved - the relationship between the doctor and patient.

He is survived by his wife, Tara, brother Jonathan Gans, and extended family.

He will be missed.

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MEMORIAL DR. GANS
A.J. Eckert, D.O.

Dr. David Gans was more than a mentor to me. I first met him on my third-year

rotation of Internal Medicine. I knew from my medical student peers of his intimidating knowledge base and impressive, loyal panel of patients, so I was eager to learn from him. He also happened to take a liking to me during a time in my life that was emotionally and mentally challenging. We drank coffee together on Sundays and talked. He never turned me away when I stopped by his office for advice. He also kept me grounded and humble; when I started crying in an exam room about having gained a few pounds, he reminded me that this was not a crisis; that I was safe, and had a lot in my life to be grateful for. At the time, I was most grateful for him. He treated me as a colleague, not a student. He was paternal yet never patronizing. He had a gentle yet firm approach with his students and his patients. And when he spoke, we listened.

I cannot overstate how much influence he had on me, and no doubt countless others; his caring, his knowledge, his kindness and compassion, were inspiring, and set me on the path to primary care. Dr. Gans was a true physician, respectful and respected, incredibly knowledgeable, yet still always learning.

Five years after first meeting Dr. Gans, I find myself back in Humboldt. I had kept in touch with him over time, but not as much as I wish I had. I kept telling myself I would make up for interchange of only a couple of letters once I completed residency. I imagined moving back to Humboldt County, and catching up with him about the past several years. I knew he would have been proud of me, and sincerely interested in my life. That was him-- invested in others, listening, caring; never indicating how sick he actually was. He sent me photos of himself and staff at Christmastime, smiling in his genuine, kind way.

Dr. Gans passed away before I had the chance to see him again. He worked until the very end, always devoted to his patients. He cared so much about all of us. I hope he knew how loved he was in return.