

THEODORE W. LORING, M.D.

1988 Frederick KM Plessner Memorial Award

Eureka physician Theodore W. Loring is the 1988 recipient of the Frederick K.M. Plessner Memorial Award. Doctor Loring stands as a role model, not just for rural physicians, but for all physicians,. As one of his associates has said, “When you think of the medical field in Humboldt-Del Norte Counties, you automatically think of Ted Loring - Dr. Ted, as his patients know him.” Dr. Loring is truly that rarity, a doctor’s doctor, exemplifying the ethics of practicing medicine and demonstrating the real value of wisdom, caring and concern in the treatment of his patients in his rural community.

He started practicing as an obstetrician and gynecologist in Eureka in 1951, after graduating with his B.S. and M.D. degrees from Stanford University. Dr. Loring immediately became active in the Humboldt-Del Norte County Medical Society, and was elected its president only five years later, in 1956.

In 1958, he became a member of the CMA House of Delegates, in which he served until 1982. He was a member of the CMA Council from 1976 through 1982 and held the post of Council Secretary from 1979 until 1982. He served on the Editorial Board of The Western Journal of Medicine and, at one time or another, nearly every committee of the CMA. He is a member of the AMA and served as a member of its House of Delegates for eight years. He is a member of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and is certified by the American Board of OB/GYN. But Ted Loring has also dedicated himself to his community. According to another colleague, Dr. Loring “is tireless in his approach to help mothers, mother’s daughters, and their daughters’ daughters. He is the spirit of our medical community.” It was in that spirit he founded the Humboldt Perinatal Clinic for the indigent, low-risk pregnancy patients. He also has served as advisor and supervising physician for the Certified Nurse Midwives who care for these patients at the clinic and in the hospital.

His other great gift to the people of Eureka was his commitment to the modernizations, improvement and stability of Eureka’s acute care hospital facilities. He twice served as Chief of Staff of The General Hospital, and has been active with the Union Labor Hospital Board since 1980. A hospital representative put it well, in phrasing his thoughts about Dr. Loring: “There are special people in the world who have a strong influence on one’s life because of high personal and professional integrity, unquestioned caring for their community and fellow human beings, and their unbelievable dedication and energy to support programs directed at improving the quality of life of the communities in which they live.”

Dr. Loring’s social conscience has led him to active participation on the Board of Directors of the Boy Scouts of America, the Salvation Army, the Redwood Council, and the Rotary Club, serving as President in 1969. He was also President of the Stanford Medical Alumni in 1972, was on the Stanford Board of Governors for ten years, and was a member of the Board of Directors of Blue Shield of California for five years.

The impressive list of service continues. During the professional liability crisis of the early 1970s, Dr. Loring was instrumental in the formation and was a founding Director of NORCAL Mutual Insurance Company, as well as a founder of the Humboldt-Del Norte Foundation for

Medical Care in 1959. It is obvious that Ted Loring has devoted a lifetime to the service of his fellow man.

This account by no means exhausts the endless contributions Ted Loring has made on behalf of the community of Eureka, his patients, the CMA and the practice of medicine. Indeed, he personifies, as well as anyone could, the high personal ethics and practice standards of a Plessner Award recipient.