



Dr. Walter Locklin

Life Story

Walter "Kaye" Locklin held many titles during his long and fruitful life, but no title was dearer to him than that of a caring father. He was a thinker, a musician, a doctor - anything that Kaye pursued, he achieved. His life was marked by success after success, but what Kaye was most thankful for was a great family to share the good times with.

The modern way of life was still in its infancy in the year 1915. The skies were dark and thunderous over the European continent where WWI raged at the cost of millions of lives. At home, newly established industries labored under the heavy pressure of war demand. It was a time of great change, when cities swelled and business boomed. Kaye was born into this era of progression on June 14th, 1915, the only son of Walter and Gladys Locklin. His father died when Kaye was only 3 years old and his mother remarried a while later. Without the traditional family unit to look after him, Kaye moved to Paw Paw, Michigan to live with his grandmother on Maple Lake. His youth was devoted to books, chemistry sets and building his own radios. He had a voracious appetite for knowledge in general and exerted this desire by reading constantly. He graduated from public school at the age of 16 in order to travel to France to study at the Lycee Michelet Academy in Paris. While attending the academy he took advanced courses which earned him college credits. He returned home to the United States and applied these credits to the University of Michigan Medical School where he started in as a 3rd year med student. While attending college, he met a young lady named Jean Hanson on a blind date. The two hit it off and a long romance ensued. The good times didn't last very long, however. Both Kaye's romantic and scholarly ambitions were thrown for a loop in 1941 when America directly joined World War II. Kaye served his country in the Air Force reserve, but was quickly activated as a full-fledged flight surgeon. Jean followed him from base to base while he was still stationed in the states, but she was unable to relocate when Kaye was sent overseas. Before leaving for Europe, he married Jean Ann on April 5th, 1941. What Kaye thought would be a short one-year tour slowly turned into an intense five-year stay. His skill as a surgeon was far too crucial for the Air Force to lose so he was repeatedly asked to stay on and did so until the end of the war. He finally parted ways with the armed forces on Feb. 1st, 1946 after having attained the rank of Major. Kaye returned to Michigan where he set about starting a medical practice and a family with his wife and best friend, Jean. He was soon licensed as an ear, nose and throat doctor and set up his own practice in 1949. Times were good and the couple decided to have children. They had two daughters, Tricia and Marykaye. Kaye absolutely loved spending time with his girls; he shared all of his passions with them, especially his love of learning. He was also an avid boater and practiced this hobby with the family by taking them from Holland to the North Channel every summer by way of powerboat. As the years flew by, Kaye became more and more respected and accomplished in his field. He was invited into and participated in many different medical organizations including The American Medical Association, Michigan State Medical Society (as a board member and delegate), Kalamazoo Academy of Medicine (past president,

treasurer and board member, and several others, too numerous to list. Needless to say, Kaye was one of the tops in his field. He retired from practice in 1991 in order to spend more time with his wife and family doing the things he loved the most. One of these interests was traveling, from South Haven all the way down to sunny beaches of Cancun. His wife was always his favorite traveling partner. Kaye was also known to relax at home with a good book as he often complained that he never had time to read while keeping up with the medical profession. Recently he finished a detailed novel on Quantum Physics and (of course) the Harry Potter series. Crosswords were a daily favorite too; anything to keep his mind sharp. Kaye loved music almost as much as reading and traveling. He played the accordion, coronet, organ and the keyboard, and was very accomplished at each instrument. His musical tastes ranged from Dixieland Jazz all the way to Jimmy Buffet. And just to prove that there was nothing he couldn't do, Kaye was also a pilot. He was an amazing man who accomplished many things in just a single lifetime. Though he was no doubt worthy of tremendous praise for his work as a professional and as a volunteer, Kaye didn't require great recognition in order to be happy with his life. Above all, his greatest accomplishment was his wonderful family that brought him so much happiness throughout his life. Kaye passed away on Friday August 8th 2003 at Borgess Medical center. He is predeceased by his wife Jean Ann Hanson in 1997 and a sister, Dorothy Hanson. He is survived by his two daughters: Tricia (David) Atlas of Wilmette, IL and Marykaye (Garry) Blasius of Kalamazoo; two sisters: Mary Bradley of Costa Mesa, CA and Gwen Brewer of Agoura, CA; five grandchildren: Cameron and Kenneth Blasius, Geoffrey, Jonathan and Jessica Atlas; and a niece, Angele Brewer of CA. Friends may visit the family on Wednesday from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM at the BETZLER FUNERAL HOMES located on Stadium Drive, West of US-131, where a Celebration of Life Service will be held at 1:00 PM that afternoon with Rev. James Dyke officiating. To read Kaye's complete life story, share a memory, send flowers, or make a memorial contribution to the West Michigan cancer center, please visit his personal web page at www.lifestorynet.com. Kaye was a caring and inspiring man who brought a special light to the lives of his loved ones. He will be greatly missed.