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Alva Cook Jr.



Alva Dean Cook, Jr. was born on July 19, 1925, in the US Military Hospital in the town of Baguio, on the Island of Luzon in the Philippines. He passed away peacefully at Aldersgate Village on May 25, 2017, surrounded by his family. Late in life he liked to say, I was conceived in China and born in the Philippines . This saying reflects his upbringing in a missionary family whose medical missionary work was conducted in both countries. This missionary upbringing was reflected throughout his life as a devout Christian and a dedicated servant to his community. His mother and father settled in Dayton, Ohio. In Dayton, he was a star athlete at Fairmont High School and graduated at the top of his class in 1943. He attended Williams College under the Navy s V-12 program to be trained as a medical doctor. He continued his V-12 training by attending medical school at Loyola (Chicago) School of Medicine. He interned at the Cook County Hospital. While in Chicago, he met the love of his life, nursing cadet, Ruth Peterson. They were married in Chicago on June 11, 1949. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Ruth; his sons, John (Jelane), and Robert (Ratna); his four grandchildren, Andrew, Sarah, Fiona and Ian (Maddie). Dean was preceded in death by his parents, sisters, older brother and his beloved son, Dean III. Upon being commissioned as a Navy Doctor, he served his country during the Korean War in Washington D.C. and San Diego. After his separation from the Navy, he returned to Dayton and worked with his father, Alva Dean Cook, in general practice. Dean left general practice and completed a psychiatric residency at the Menninger Clinic and took a position practicing psychiatry at the Colmery O Neil VA Medical Center. At the VA, he continued to serve his country for 30 years by providing psychiatric help to the veterans of WWII, Korea and Vietnam. After retiring from the VA, he continued his life of service by taking a psychiatric position with the Pawnee Mental Health Services in Manhattan and Junction City. He was much loved by the staff and the patients he came in contact with. He was often quoted as saying it was the best job I ever had . Dean s greatest service to his community came after losing his middle son, Alva Dean, III, to AIDS in 1991. Dean and Ruth became very active members of PFLAG and provided AIDS education to professionals, parents and student throughout Topeka and Kansas. Dean and Ruth provided priceless support to the gay community, by becoming surrogate parents to those members who had been rejected by their families and round the clock support for parents in crisis. His passions in life, outside of community service, included singing with the Williams College Octet during their reunions and gardening. Dean achieved the status of a Shawnee County Master Gardener and was very proud of the shade gardens he carved out of the Shunganunga Creek wilderness. Friends, colleagues and patients knew Dean as a compassionate, kind, cheerful, gentleman of great intelligence, humility and humor. His ability to care for, talk to and help anyone at anytime enriched the lives of everyone fortunate enough to have known him. A celebration of Dean s life will be at 10:30 a.m. on June 10, 2017, at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 3625 SW Wanamaker Road, Topeka KS 66614. The family will receive guests prior to the service beginning at 9:30 a.m. Inurnment will be private in Penwell-Gabel Cemetery. Memorial contributions can be made to the Prince of Peace Building Fund, sent in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614. Condolences may be sent online to www.kevinbrennafamily.com .



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