Dr. Alton L. Steiner

July 26, 1936 - May 6, 2023

Alton L. Steiner, 86, physician and mentor, died at his home in Houston, May 6, 2023. He spent fifty years in medicine, engaged in research, teaching, and patient care. He embraced his work and pastimes with energy and passion. His optimism and broad smile encouraged and comforted many.

Born in Albany, NY, he attended The Albany Academy, Harvard College, Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, and Washington University of St. Louis. He practiced medicine at Albany Medical Center, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, The University of Texas, Houston, and St. Joseph Hospital, Houston.

He is predeceased by his parents, Eugene and Eva Steiner, sister, Lois Biegelson, and brother, Alan Steiner. He is survived by his wife, Emily, his children, Laurie Halperin (Nuri), Daniel Steiner (Tina), Richard Steiner (Natalie) and six much loved grandchildren.

In his memory, you may make a donation to the charity of your choice or buy a piece of art that speaks to your heart.

Services will be held at a future date in Albany, New York.

Tribute Wall

RR

I was a patient of Dr. Steiner from 2002 until he retired. I never felt rushed during appointments. We sat in his office and talked about life. He was a very good doctor. I just found out about his passing. He crossed my mind this morning so I did an internet search and found his obituary. My condolences to his family.

Renee Raley - January 23, 2024 at 04:09 PM

I am so grateful to have known Dr. Steiner. Love to you, Emily. Your support together of Houston artists and the Houston art community has had a real and positive impact on so many. I am especially glad to have the opportunity to work with you. My heart goes out to you and your beautiful family. It has been a long, slow transition. May you all find peace and may his memory always be a blessing.

Heidi Vaughan - May 16, 2023 at 06:04 PM

RG

One of Alton's important contributions to medicine was the identification of a kindred with endocrine tumors that included medullary thyroid carcinoma, hyperparathyroidism and pheochromocytoma (Medicine 47:371-409, 1968). His major contribution was the recognition that this syndrome was inherited (passed from parent to child) and differed from another endocrine genetic tumor syndrome in which there were pituitary, pancreatic and parathyroid tumors. He (and his coauthors) classified the latter syndrome as multiple endocrine neoplasia type 1 (MEN1) and the former as multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2 (MEN2). This classification system has been utilized for more than 50 years and provided the framework for subsequent work that led to the cure of the malignant thyroid tumor (medullary) and the identification of the gene (DNA) abnormalities that caused MEN2. DNA abnormalities or mutations of this gene (known as RET) have also been identified in a number of other tumors, including 5% of lung cancers. Work over the past decade has led to the development of drugs that block the effects of the RET mutations and have revolutionized the treatment of thyroid cancer, lung cancer and other malignancies with RET DNA abnormalities. Alton could not have predicted in 1968 the impact that his observations would have and the good that would evolve from them. Rest in peace.

Robert Gagel - May 09, 2023 at 10:38 AM