



## John Wong

April 1, 1932 - June 17, 2014

John Wong, M.D.

John W. H. Wong passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loved ones, on June 17, 2014. Dr. Wong was born in Hong Kong on April 1, 1932, the fifth of eight children. His early years were shaped by the Japanese Occupation in World War II, but in spite of this difficult beginning, he flourished, graduating from medical school in Canada. While there, he met his beloved wife Jacoba (Greta), whom he married in 1960.

Dr. Wong started his medical career with Project Concern in Hong Kong before moving to the Visalia area, where he established a long-term medical practice. He loved his work as a family physician and served the community for almost 45 years, both in public and private practice and as Medical Director of the Tulare County Hospital. Along with his medical degree, he also earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration. He then broke medical ground as a patient when he became the first recipient of a radical new kidney transplant procedure in the United States.

Dr. Wong retired from his practice in 2009, which gave him more time to pursue his hobbies. He was a true Renaissance man with many interests. John loved playing classical piano from a young age and also learned to play the guitar and more esoteric instruments such as the harmonica. He fenced

and played tennis as long as his health allowed him to do so. John was passionate about his Chinese heritage and food and never met a plate of dim sum he didn't like. He was a talented painter and dabbled in other arts, including modern wood sculptures, much to the chagrin of his family.

Dr. Wong loved to travel and explored many parts of the world. He was the quintessential family man and spent time during his final years cruising in Mexico, Greece and Italy with his wife, children and especially his beloved grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife Greta, his children Kimberley (Cornelius Wright), Kendall (Kimberly), Kevane (Janice), Carol (Greg), Kellicia (Terry Kotsatos) and Keenan (Alicia) and grandchildren Chris, Jenny, Gillian, Braeden, Anikka, Kaia, Ava, Joshua and Keira. Additionally, he is survived by his sisters Lucille, Miranda and Lillian, brother Joe and countless nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents, two sisters and a brother.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Dr. John W. H. Wong can be made to Kaweah Delta Hospice. A memorial tribute may be offered by logging onto [www.salseranddillard.com](http://www.salseranddillard.com).

A public celebration of John Wong's life will be held at the Chinese Cultural Center, 500 S. Akers St. in Visalia on Saturday, July 19th at 5:00pm.

# Tribute Wall

DS

“ Sorry to hear of Dr. Wong passing, thankful to have gone to school with some of his kids who I think he raised to be very polite and friendly, God bless with comfort and peace of Jesus.

Dana Switzer - September 10, 2014 at 02:08 AM

DJ

“ Dear Mrs. Wong and Family, Please accept our sincere sympathy on the passing of John. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time. Sincerely, Dr. and Mrs. Roger Johnson

Dr and Mrs. Roger Johnson - July 14, 2014 at 09:29 AM

DF

“ Since our first meeting at Tulare County Hospital in 1968, I've always have found John an enthusiastic and engaging physician who was full of ideas about patient's needs. He always had a funny story to tell or a tasteful joke to relate to his associates. I remember once in the OR when he was preparing to assist a surgeon with a major surgery he was saying something about one of the nursing assistants and couldn't remember her name; then he casually said something like "I can't tell these American girls apart, they all look the same!" akin to what we often heard people glibly say about our Oriental friends in past times. Our understanding was suddenly expanded! John was always full of joy, even when he wasn't feeling well. He looked on the brighter side of life and always filled our lives with a portion of his enthusiasm. We in our family wish Greta and John's family God's choicest blessings at this time and know that their lives brim with memories of all he did with them and the zest with which he lived. David and Margrit Feil and Family

David G. Feil,M.D. - July 01, 2014 at 05:45 PM

JT

“ Sorry to hear about Dr. Wong. You have my heartfelt sympathy. I am so glad I was able to converse with you, Greta and him at our chance meeting just weeks before his passing. He was such a multi-talented and outstanding individual. Julia Tan

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Julia tan - June 30, 2014 at 03:23 PM

KW

“ I am so grateful to have known Dr. Wong. From my first day working as a nurses aide at Kaweah Delta to the last time I saw him as a RN, his smile and gentle nature always made me happy. He never forgot my name in over 30 years that I knew him. His favorite saying when he would ask me to help find his patient was "Ahh! right church wrong pew!" meaning he was in the right hospital, but wrong nursing unit! It is still one of my favorite sayings! Dr. Wong was one of the founding physicians that nurtured me through nursing school and beyond. I will miss you Dr. Wong, but I am happy to know that you have finally found the RIGHT pew! My thoughts and prayers to Greta, his children and grandchildren. Thank you for the memories Dr. Wong. See you on the next shift!  
Kathy Wittman RN

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Kathy Wittman - June 29, 2014 at 07:56 PM

KW

“ Kathy Wittman lit a candle in memory of John Wong



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Kathy Wittman - June 29, 2014 at 07:41 PM

AG

“ My deepest sympathy to you, Greta, and to your beautiful family. John's warm smile and sense of humor will be missed by many. May God's love console and strengthen you all through this difficult time.

Love,  
Aphrodite G.

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**Aphrodite G.** - June 28, 2014 at 11:15 PM

JM

Greta,

*I am deeply saddened by the news of John's passing. It brings to a premature closing the life of a very splendid physician, a professional filled with the kind of healing that reaches well beyond training and experience- it used his phenomenal empathy and insights to the patient's most significant maladies, whether physical, emotional, spiritual . I saw this healing capability during his meaningful work with us in Asia,  
Know , lady, that we are compromised by such a loss, only having the memories - the respect, honor, and sense of his qualities of compassion, affection, healing to keep us mindful of his true worth, his amazing humor and humanity.*

*Jim Turpin, MD, MPH founder : [www.PCIGlobal.org](http://www.PCIGlobal.org)*

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**Jim Turpin, MD, MPH** - July 03, 2014 at 02:48 PM

CR

“ I'm very sorry for your loss. Dr. Wong will be greatly missed. I was a patient of his for many years. He was a great doctor. My thoughts and prayers are with all of Dr. Wong's family.

*Carolyn Ransdell*

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**Carolyn Ransdell** - June 28, 2014 at 10:02 AM

SI

“ When I think of Dr. Wong I think of a man who was my mentor, my hero and most of all a very much loved and admired friend. His laughter is one I will never forget. He was a man who dearly loved his family and was devoted to the practice of medicine. Throughout the years that I worked with him I have seen him treat hundreds of patients with great skill and expertise. Even in very stressful times he always remained calm and did all he could to assure that his patients had the best outcome possible.

*I started working with Dr. Wong and Greta in the 60's at the old Tulare County Hospital. I then continued working with him when I began my career at Kaweah Delta Hospital. For several of those years he also served as a personal physician for me and my husband Charles.*

*I remember having lunch with him just before his transplant. We talked about his illness and he expressed his appreciation for the family member who was donating a kidney to him. He was so thankful that he would have the chance to spend more time with his family and to continue his practice in field of medicine. He talked about his children and Greta and how proud he was of them and their accomplishments.*

*Greta and family please know how sorry I am for the loss of this great man who had such an impact on my life. I feel such a void knowing he is gone. I will keep precious memories of him in my heart forever and will always be thankful to have shared fifty years of my life with him. Please know how very much he was loved by me and my husband and how much he loved all of you and how proud he was of you. Sandy Iacono*

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**Sandra Iacono** - June 26, 2014 at 10:30 AM

MR

“ *Dr. Wong was the best doctor and friend that I could have ever been blessed with..I worked with Dr. Wong at the old Tulare County Hospital...and he became my family doctor when he started at VMC...I'm so sorry for your loss.....he will always be remembered for his caring and friendship...he literally saved my life.....I hope you find comfort knowing he accomplished so much in the short time he was given here on earth.....Forever in my prayers.....Mary Gaxiola Robison*

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**Mary Gaxiola Robison** - June 26, 2014 at 03:09 AM

WL

“ *Dr. Wong brings only fond memories. His smile. His art. His music. His love of family and its history. His love of medicine, and perhaps more so the ability to practice it. His excitement that his antirejection medicine for his kidney gave him a bit more peach fuzz on his bald head! The fun we had nearly every day when he came by to get his cup refilled with "instant hot water" for his Jasmine tea and my chance to stand at attention, salute, and have him salute back and put me "at ease" after which we both would laugh. The time he met a friend and myself after hours at the clinic - the friend had fallen in the Sierras and deeply cut his forehead. Dr. Wong unlocked the building, sewed up his wound and sent us on our way with payment only of thanks from us. He was a friend, gentleman, and a very gentle man.*

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**Wayne Luallen** - June 19, 2014 at 11:52 PM

TP

“ *My most sincere condolences to Greta and the entire Wong family.*

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**Tami Postlewaite-Warner** - June 19, 2014 at 08:36 PM

MG

“ My heart broke in the hearing of this news. My heart felt condolences to Mrs. Greta Wong, thier children, and grandchildren. It was such an honor to be able to work with Dr Wong up untill his retirement . I learned so much from him , he was always so full of joy and always had a joke to tell us to brighten our day. Such a wonderful man with a great love for his patients and practicing medicine. Dr wong will always hold a very special place in my heart. May he rest in peace, and may the family be surrounded by love and support.  
Deepest Condolences,  
Monica Garcia

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**Monica Garcia** - June 19, 2014 at 03:54 PM

JG

“ Jessica Gutierrez lit a candle in memory of John Wong



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**Jessica Gutierrez** - June 19, 2014 at 02:21 PM

JC

“ Judy Ceballos lit a candle in memory of John Wong



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**Judy Ceballos** - June 19, 2014 at 01:32 PM