



## Russell Thomas Mitts

May 21, 1923 - March 14, 2017

Beloved Dr. Russell Thomas Mitts was born May 21, 1923, to Roger and Minnerva Mitts in Dunbar, Pennsylvania; a small town west of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was the third oldest of four children in the Mitts family; the eldest Roger, the youngest Murray, and the middle sister Carley. They soon moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania living in the Homewood section of Pittsburgh. He graduated from Westinghouse High School as its Salutatorian and then went to the University of Pittsburgh on a full scholarship.

After one year, he transferred to Columbia College in Washington DC, joined the ROTC and graduated with a BA in 1943. Joining the US Army immediately after, he also was accepted to medical school at Loma Linda University in California. While attending medical school, he walked by a tall beautiful girl named Virginia Hackman. After passing each other in between medical school classes, they both turned around to "check" each other out. They soon were dating and were married March 27, 1943, in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Mitts finished medical school and did his internship at LA County Hospital systems. He and Virginia had two children; Ginney in 1944 and Thomas in 1947. Dr. Mitts served his country as an army surgeon at Pine Camp, New York and Fort Benning, Georgia. He was discharge honorably with a rank of Captain.

Dr. Mitts moved his family to Visalia in the summer of 1949. His brother Roger was a physician in Visalia and needed help. His first friend in town was

Thoburn Haworth, and their friendship lasted until their deaths. He bought his first car from Al McAuliff in Visalia.

Dr. Mitts was active in his church and was a founder of Sierra View Academy in Exeter. He donated his time and money to education and local charities in Visalia. During his long medical career, he delivered over 10,000 babies in the Visalia area. He took care of people's health and welfare, sometimes without payment and never counted or worried. He paid for several different young people to attend college.

We remember an itinerant farm laborer who knocked on our door at home one afternoon. The gentleman explained who he was and that 20 years before Dr. Mitts had removed a ruptured appendix from him. At that time, he had no money and was there to pay his old medical bill. He gave Dr Mitts \$35.00 and expressed his sincere appreciation. Our Dad just smiled, knowing that the impact we can have on the lives of others is immeasurable.

Dr. Mitts lost his dear wife to cancer in 1983. She was the love of his life and he never remarried. He had three grandchildren and four great grandchildren and was known to them affectionately as "Papa". He had lived in a retirement home in Fresno from 2015 until his death on March 13, 2017.

Dr. Russell Mitts was beloved by his family, his patients, his church and the community. He was a voracious reader of books-mainly history, and a truly gifted, generous, wise man who touched many lives.

In lieu of flowers, please donate in his honor to the charity of your choice. Services will be private.

# Tribute Wall

LM

“ Dr. Mitts was our family doctor as long as i can remember. In fact, i was 5 or 6 when i came down with symptoms of sickness. That would have been around 1956 or 1957. My Mom ask Dr. Mitts if he could come to our home since it was winter, my temperature was high and was sick at my stomach. I vividly remember Dr. Mitts coming to our home that evening. He was a wonderful doctor and person. In 2004 he sadly advised my sister and i that our Mother was dying. It was his gentle and well experienced technic that helped us accept the news. We will miss Dr. Mitts. Respectfully,  
Larry Macri

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**larry macri** - April 08, 2019 at 06:46 PM

PB

“ Dear Thomas Mitts, I recently retired but began working at KDDH in the 70's as a nurse. I first met your dad when I worked in Pediatrics as a fairly new nurse. He was always so pleasant, kind, patient with me; he always stood erect with such good posture and always had a sweet smile on his face. He was easy to talk to also. Most recently I had the privilege of caring for him in Cardiac Rehab as he came in to exercise after his heart incident. He often greeted me with a kiss but always a hug. He was one of a kind, a very special man. I am glad that he enjoyed good health for so many years. I am glad he is reunited with his wife and that you will see him again in heaven.  
Sincerely, Pat Boon

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**Pat Boon** - April 04, 2017 at 02:16 PM

GD

“ Moving to Visalia 24 years ago , I found myself sitting in his waiting room . My wife told me I would Love the man , for he was her Primary Doctor for many years . Love is a very strong word to describe anyone and it surely fits Dr. Mitts . A more compassionate man and Physician I met that day and have not met since . Having recently heard of his passing was a great chock to my wife and I . We would like express our sorrow to his entire family for he was a caring and loving man to you all as well as to us , his patients .

*Gil and Carole Dominguez*

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**gil dominguez** - April 04, 2017 at 11:03 AM

TC

“ Dr Mitts was my Dr from early 1970's and my parents earlier than that until he retired. What a caring, gentle, wonderful man he was. He always made me feel like he really cared, well, because he did. He always gave a hug and made me feel like I was important and familiar to him when he saw me. The world was a much better place with him in it. What a joy he was. RIP Dr Russell Thomas Mitts. You were a special, special man. Love Terri (Smock) Casey

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**Terri Casey** - April 01, 2017 at 08:49 PM

BF

“ *Dr Russell T Mitts was not only our family physician but our friend as well. Always willing to take your call no matter what time of day/night. In 2005, Dr. Mitts had to deliver news of a cancer diagnosis to me and it hurt him as much as it shocked me. He stood by me, gave me support, encouragement and prayed with me before he performed a biopsy. He continued to follow my care and rejoiced with us when I beat lymphoma. It saddens us to know we have lost a friend, but we rejoice that he has graduated to his new home with our Lord & Savior. Our prayers are with his family and many friends. May God's peace comfort you at this time of loss.*

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**Brett & Glenda Fly** - March 25, 2017 at 12:50 AM

TE

“ *Dr Mitts was our family physician ever since we arrive from Iowa in 1959. I can remember as a child being scared to walk into his Acequia office and smell the " medicine like atmosphere"! Ha...now that I look back. He did my freshman football physical and shot in the butt as an adult when sick with the flu. My mother (Colleen Donald) always called him Russel...I wondered as a kid why she didn't say Doctor..? He was kind, caring and gentle! A pillar in our little community and let a great legacy. My mom lives in Fresno now...I will see her this afternoon and share the sad news. Blessings and prayers...Ted Donald*

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**TedDonald** - March 23, 2017 at 11:54 AM

CS

“ My sisters and I were a few of the many babies Dr. Mitts delivered over the years. I have very fond memories of going to his office for visits as a child. Dr. Mitts was always so kind, compassionate and thoughtful in his care. I was never scared or afraid to see him and he always handled our medical issues with such wonderful care and concern. He was such a decent man and someone I will always remember with much fondness. My prayers and sympathies to the family during this time of loss.

*Claudia Line Sherwood*

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**Claudia Sherwood** - March 22, 2017 at 04:55 PM

DM

“ Dr. Mitts was always a gentleman, quietly and steadily going about his patient care. I saw him in the hospital and staff meetings. He was always thoughtful and kind to everyone. He was a traditional physician of an earlier mold which in our day is a rare find. He cared more about the patient's needs than how he would be paid or could bill them. We could benefit from more like-minded physicians in our society today!

*David G. Feil, M.D.*

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**David G. Feil, M.D.** - March 22, 2017 at 12:12 PM

PT

“ Dr Mitts was my families doctor as long as I can remember. I think shortly after he started busy in Visalia. He delivered my two grown sons. I loved him not only as my doctor but how he cared for you as a person. We need more people in this world like the doctor. He helped be through a lot of hard times including my breast cancer. He seen that I received the care I needed & that was over 20 years ago. I would run into him at the grocery store. He always had that beautiful smile & a hug for me. I enjoyed reading a little part of his history. Thanks for sharing. Truly miss & love him. Sending my prayers & blessing to the family.



Pam

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**Pam Turner** - March 21, 2017 at 12:06 PM

MM

“ Dr Mitts was a great man He was a compassionare man He often made house call He truely was a gift from God He was responsible for many lives brought into this world. He also saved many lives because of his compassion gentle kind spirit I worked as a surgical tech and as a nurse with him My compassion for people and nursing is in much due to his heart for Medicine andgiving. He will be truely missed. May God be with his family at this time Thank you Dr mitts for enriching my life. Mac

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**Major David MacDonald** - March 17, 2017 at 12:09 AM

TH

“ Today the most compassionate,, caring man I ever met. My mom and I enjoyed having lunch with him for years. Mom met him when she was 15 and I knew him from day one. He brought me into this world. God has truly received an angel this week. He will finally be with his love.. his wife. My mom and I are truly heartbroken along with many of my family. God bless you Dr. Mitts we love you and miss you.

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**tammy hall** - March 17, 2017 at 12:03 AM

LN

“ Dr. Mitts was such a wonderful person and doctor. My family adored him. He had a great bedside manner. There was nobody like him. He delivered me back in 1979. He was the first face i saw and he always was happy to remind me. I will always be proud to say I knew him. We will miss him but will always remember him. My sympathies to his family.

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**Lisa Nunez-Bray** - March 16, 2017 at 02:28 PM