



Daniel Keith Cheney

Dr. Daniel K Cheney, retired oral surgeon from Bellingham, WA passed away peacefully at Hospice House on August 3, 2013. Those who knew him, whether professionally or personally, knew him to be a man of uncommon integrity, dignity, courage, perseverance, generosity and kindness.

Dan grew up in Lima, Ohio and attended Ohio State University where he gained early admission to the College of Dentistry. While at OSU he played Lacrosse and was a three-year letter winner for the Buckeyes, team captain during his senior season and named All American. Dan recently learned that he had been selected for induction into the 2013 OSU Athletic Hall of Fame. As a result, he experienced many hours of joy planning the trip to Columbus on September 27th, and envisioning the honor of taking his place mid-field during halftime of the OSU vs. Wisconsin football game.

Following dental school, Dan was commissioned as an officer in the Army and began his oral surgery training at Georgetown University. As a true patriot, he interrupted his residency and volunteered to serve in Vietnam. Prior to leaving for war, he managed to talk someone into sending him to Airborne School and became one of only a handful of dental officers to ever qualify as a paratrooper. While serving in Vietnam, Dan was named the Commanding Officer of a Medical Company & Brigade, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. He holds the distinction of being the only Dental Surgeon to ever command a Medical Clearing Company during the war. His decorations include the Combat Medical Badge, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Medal.

After Vietnam, Dan returned to Madigan General Hospital where he was Chief of the Oral Surgery Training Program and Director of the General Dentistry Residency. In 1972, Dan left active duty to establish a successful oral and maxillofacial surgery practice in Bellingham, WA. He continued to serve in the U.S. Army Reserve, commanding a reserve unit in Seattle, and then in Bellingham, and retiring with the rank of Colonel in 1997.

Dr. Cheney shared his gifts with many people and his service to his patients and community is legendary. He exemplified the spirit of community involvement, from his civic activities to his commitment to health care both locally and internationally. An Eagle Scout, he was a scouting volunteer at various posts with the Mt. Baker Council. He served on numerous Boards including the American Red Cross, YMCA, United Way, the Bellingham Festival of Music, Mt. Baker Theater, WWU Athletic Advisory Board, Rotary, and Dollars for Scholars. He is past president of the Rotary Club of Bellingham, a Paul Harris Fellow, received the Michael K. Mischaikow Rotary International Award, twice received the Annual Community Service Award and was also named an Honorary Life Member of Rotary.

Dan was honored in 1992 with the Interfaith Coalition Volunteer of the Year Award for his work in establishing the clinic. He received the WA State Dental Association Citizen of the Year in 1997. For many years in succession, he spent three weeks as a member of a dental team working in the remote Highlands of Guatemala, providing care to the indigenous people. Despite the continued challenges of an aggressive form of arthritis, Dan always insisted on shouldering his share of the load, often making light of his disease by saying, Im kind of the bionic guy. Dr. Cheney maintained a full clinic and served as a clinical professor at the University Of WA School Of Dentistry until retiring in 2008. He was a member of numerous professional societies and associations, including the American College of Dentists.

Dan was a beloved man and left his mark on nearly every person he touched, but those who will miss him most dearly are his loving wife of 33 years, Joyce, daughter Dr. Amy Cheney and son, Christopher Cheney. Dan is also survived by his brother, John Cheney, and sisters Mary Lane and Barbara Mulholland all of Ohio, in addition to numerous nieces and nephews.

Farewell Tribute Information