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Clay William Richardson

Dec. 20, 1955 - Aug. 4, 2021

Clay William Richardson, 65, of Morganton, N.C., passed away peacefully Wednesday, August 4, 2021, at home under hospice care.

Dr. Richardson was born December 20, 1955, in Hendersonville, N.C. He is the son of Dotty C. Gallaway and the late G.C. (Buddy) Richardson, Jr. He graduated with honors from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as an undergraduate (playing J.V. basketball for then assistant coach Roy Williams) before completing his medical studies at the UNC School of Medicine. He completed his professional training at the MAHEC-Asheville Family Medicine Residency Program, serving as Chief Resident in his final year. Dr. Richardson was board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and was a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians and North Carolina Medical Society.

He was preceded in death by his father and sister, Peggy C. Richardson.

Clay is survived by his wife, Joani Richardson; daughter, Maggie Delany; granddaughters, Caroline and Emma; mother; sister Pamela Karr; brother Mike Richardson; several nieces and nephews, and seven year-long foreign exchange students who called Clay “Dad”.

Dr. Richardson had a profound effect on developing quality medical care in Burke County. After 9 years without a local physician, he established Glen Alpine Family Medicine, in August 1985 (now Table Rock Family Medicine) to serve western Burke County. After 7 years of mostly solo practice, Clay began to attract permanent partners. The office now includes 8 providers, 21 staff and provides care for more

than 8,500 people in the region. Clay would tell you he couldn't have done it without his practice manager Laura Justice who helped him build the practice from day one, until his medical retirement in January 2021.

In addition to focusing on his own practice, Dr. Richardson played an impactful role in the medical leadership for the community. He was an inaugural member of the Blue Ridge Medical Group Provider Advisory Council and served as the Medical Director of Quality for BRMG. He is past president of the Burke County Medical Society. He served on the Blue Ridge Health Care Board of Directors 2007-2021, Board Executive Committee 2009-2021, and the Board Quality and Patient Safety Committee 2016-2021. He continued to enhance the medical education of others, including acting as Medical Advisor to the Medical Assisting program at Western Piedmont Community College.

Clay, along with his wife Joani, was a proud community member. They served leadership roles in the May Day Biathlon for 25 years, showing hundreds of adults the beauty of Burke County and introducing the joy of healthy and active competition to countless children ages 2 – 14. Clay and Joani also revived the AFS student exchange program, becoming chapter presidents for years, bringing numerous exchange students to the county and facilitating travel abroad for local teens.

Clay will be remembered for his larger-than-life personality, sense of humor and compassionate heart. He had a love for all things outdoors and was most at home while entertaining family and friends at their vacation home in Lake Lure or traveling in the clear blue water of the Caribbean islands. Clay related to people through humor and kindness and could diffuse even the most difficult situations with laughter and empathy. He was incredibly thoughtful and the master of creativity and thinking outside the box. He inherently thought of others before himself. To know Clay, was to love him.

Dr. Clay Richardson: the son, the dad, the husband, the brother, the granddaddy, the friend, the healer, the giver, the lover of life and all things good, the most amazing human.

In keeping with Dr. Clay's desire to care for the health of all community members, a memorial service to celebrate Clay's life will be planned in the future when it is safe to gather in numbers. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Foothills Conservancy or for cancer research at www.glioblastomafoundation.org.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



Thank you for your kind words Dr.

—Lester Hildebran