

## Obituaries



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### In Memory Joseph C. Blanton, M. D.

JULY 30TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

#### In Memory Joseph C. Blanton, M. D.

Joseph C. Blanton, M. D. passed from this life into heaven on July 29, 2020. He practiced pediatrics in Sikeston, Missouri for nearly 60 years and was one of the nation's most senior practicing pediatricians when he retired earlier this year.

Dr. Blanton was born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri on December 21, 1930 to Harry and Maureen Daley Blanton. He grew up in the St. Louis suburb of Webster Groves while his father served four terms as United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri. While in St. Louis, he attended Holy Redeemer Grade School and the St. Louis University High School.

Blanton played center on the Midget Football Squad and ran the half-mile. He achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. When the family returned to Sikeston in 1946, he began attending Sikeston High School where he served as Senior Class President of the graduating class of 1948.

While returning from a Charleston-Sikeston football game, he witnessed a serious traffic accident and decided then that he wanted to be a doctor. He attended St. Louis University and, after his junior year, was admitted to the St. Louis University School of Medicine where he graduated in 1955.

While in medical school, he began dating Nancy Rose Raupp of Decatur, Illinois, a student at Fontbonne College. They married in Decatur, Illinois on June 16, 1956 and celebrated their 64th anniversary earlier this year. After graduating from medical school, Dr. Blanton worked for a year in a pathology lab and then began a residency at Cincinnati

Children's Hospital and ultimately served as Chief Resident.

He then served as a pediatrician in the U. S. Navy at the Portsmouth, Virginia Naval Hospital, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. When he finished his tour of duty in 1961, he returned with his family to his hometown of Sikeston, Missouri, joining the newly-formed Ferguson Medical Group and becoming its fifth partner. When he returned home, he became the second board-certified pediatrician between St. Louis and Memphis.

He spent the next six decades taking care of children from all over Southeast Missouri including those with the most serious medical issues. He continued to work until his full retirement earlier this year at age 89. Thousands of patients will recall being referred to as "Darlin," "Sweet Thing," "Old Timer," or "Tiger" during visits with Dr. Joe. With the limited number of pediatricians in the area, he took call every other night for thirty years. He never missed a day of work due to illness. Dr. Blanton was a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a member of the Missouri Academy of Pediatrics, and listed yearly in The Best Doctors in America.

Governor Christopher Bond appointed him to serve on the Missouri State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts. He served as the medical director of the Sikeston Regional Center for Developmental Disabilities, Chair of the Physicians Task Force of the Missouri State Department of Social Services, and a director of the Scott County Health Department. He also served as a member of the Sikeston R-VI School Board. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Sikeston Chamber of Commerce in 2001.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Nancy, of the home, four children, Joseph C. Blanton, Jr. (Felecia) of Sikeston, Dr. Mark Blanton of Sikeston, Madeline Blanton Kerr (Dr. Knox) of Jacksonville, Florida, and Dr. Kevin Blanton (Amy) of Sikeston. Dr. Kevin Blanton now practices as a pediatrician at Ferguson Medical Group in emulation of his father. Dr. and Mrs. Blanton have seven grandchildren including Mark Blanton, Jake Kerr, Cullen Kerr, Elizabeth Blanton, Luke Blanton, Grace Blanton, and Caroline Blanton.

Elizabeth is a second-year medical student at the University of Missouri. He was very proud of all of his grandchildren. Dr. Blanton is also survived by one sister, Anne Tlapek of Cape Girardeau, and two brothers, Judge Lewis Blanton (Barbara) of Sikeston, and Dr. Harry Blanton (Jane) of Cape Girardeau. He was preceded in death by his parents, Harry and Maureen Daley Blanton, and his siblings Rosemary Barr Quatmann, Patricia Kavanaugh, Maureen Klein Graham, and Dr. John Blanton.

Dr. Blanton enjoyed studying genealogy and became proficient at using his computer to conduct research. He read constantly and favored history books and spy novels. He

diligently followed the St. Louis Cardinals beginning his loyalty by taking street car rides to Sportsman's Park and watching the games without a ticket as a member of the Knothole Gang. Dr. Blanton collected and read all of the Horatio Alger books which his father had read as a boy. He loved working in the yard both at his current home and in the Woods near his childhood home on North Ranney Street. He did all yard-work by hand to make the experience last as long as possible. He gave his primary focus in his later years to helping his family and attended all of his grandchildren's school and other events without fail with wife Nancy and his son Mark.

Dr. Blanton always put the interests of others first. The family wants to thank the priests at St. Francis Xavier over the years where Dr. Blanton attended Mass whenever the doors were open, his partners, employees, and many patients at the Ferguson Medical Group, his long-time nurse Ida Cowell, Almeter Marshall, Sandra Douglas, Lamar Douglas and the other family caregivers, the neighbors on Cotton Trace and other friends, and the extended Blanton and Raupp families.

Visitation will be from 4 PM to 7 PM on Friday, July 31, at Nunnelee Funeral Chapel in Sikeston with a funeral mass at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church at 10 AM on Saturday. Dr. Blanton's grandchildren will serve as pallbearers. Ben Swiney will be an honorary pallbearer.

The family will host an Irish Wake in Dr. Blanton's honor at the Blanton Woods on North Ranney Street in Sikeston at a later date.

The family requests that memorial gifts be made to Birthright, 2633 Hopper Rd., Cape Girardeau, MO 63701, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 105 Stoddard St., Sikeston, MO 63801, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org), or a charity of choice.

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