



Dr. George Edward Alcott

February 19, 1917 - September 20, 2011

Dr. George Edward Alcott, 94, of Bald Knob, expired Tuesday, September 20, 2011, in Little Rock, AR, following multiple complications from a massive stroke suffered 16 days previously on September 4.

"Doctor George," "Doctor Alcott," "Dad," "G-Daddy," "George," "Doc," "Dr. Alcott" was born February 19, 1917, in Weiner, AR, to Dr. George Brown Alcott and Clara Mae McDaniel Alcott. His parents and two sisters, Jayne Kathryn and Eloise, predecease him.

At the age of 15 he entered college at Northwestern University in Chicago, one of nine students chosen internationally for their remarkable levels of intelligence. George was officially categorized a genius very early in his life. After finishing his undergraduate degree at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, AR, and working for Sun Oil Company in Baltimore, MD, he entered Annapolis Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD) to prepare for service in WWII. He served as First Lieutenant (in charge of the engine room) on a heavy-cruiser, the second USS Vincennes, in the Pacific arena from 1942-44 under Admirals William "Bull" Halsey and Chester Nimitz.

Doctor George was a terrific storyteller as long as he lived. He liked to recount how he was working for Sun Oil Company when one day he was walking across town to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps. On the way he began experiencing excruciating stomach cramps, until he stopped short in the middle of the sidewalk and thought, "I can't pass a physical if I can't stand up!" He turned around and went instead for a medical assessment that revealed

he had a case of acute appendicitis. While recovering from surgery in the hospital he changed his mind and decided to enlist in the U.S. Navy. If he had followed the original course, he says, he would have wound up on the beaches of Normandy where allied casualties were enormous, but did not include George Alcott. Aboard the 2nd USS Vincennes near Guadalcanal Island in the Pacific Ocean, his bunk was directly beneath a 130mm/25 caliber gun trained on the beaches and firing every 30 seconds for two months running. He accidentally "missed" one of the most deadly battles of the war, The Battle of Leyte Gulf (formerly known as the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea), when three merchant submarines were spotted off the port bow and he was sent to lead a crew on a scouting mission that lasted three hours. Leyte Gulf is generally considered to be the largest naval battle of World War II and, by some criteria, possibly the largest naval battle in history; allied casualties were staggering, but did not include 1st Lt. George Alcott. After the war he studied dentistry at University of Tennessee in Memphis and planned to set up his first practice in Southeast Arkansas. This plan, however, fell through and George learned about an opportune situation in Bald Knob. He met his future wife, Billy June Forbes, when she was a patient in his dental chair. Their first date was January 1, 1950, on the occasion of the wedding of Montine and W.C. Whitley. George and June married on March 19 that same year.

Forty-four years later (January 1996) June died of cancer.

During his 49 years as a dentist in Bald Knob, Doctor Alcott was deeply committed to teaching his patients how to care for their own teeth, instead of letting them decay and/or require costly oral surgery. Many of his proteges frowned upon this preventive approach since their careers depended on patients not taking care of their teeth. His first office was upstairs on the north side of downtown Main St., Bald Knob. He used to keep a two-gallon jar filled with molars he'd removed, which was a source of fascination to his older children, Forbes and Cynthia. During the devastating tornado of 1952 the young dentist completed a root canal while dismissing the deafening sound of

banging shutters. After the procedure was finished he and the patient left the office; walking out through the little green door in the alley they were overwhelmed to see that the south side of downtown Main St. had been completely leveled by the storm.

People told the story of how Dr. George tried to drive home, frantic to check on his wife and two-week-old infant son Forbes. He couldn't drive past the fallen trees in the street and went sprinting "like Ichabod Crane" up the hill to find the roof torn off his home except for one corner of the house where June and Forbes were huddled in a bathtub.

He served twice as president of the Arkansas Dental Association and traveled widely promoting preventive dentistry. In addition to general dentistry and oral surgery he also practiced orthodontia. Many times Doctor George would accept farm produce or other goods in return for his perfectionist's work. When welfare began paying for children's dental care in the early 1960s, and the paperwork/claims were bogged by red tape, he would often perform his services for free.

One of his biggest disappointments was the fact that, to this day, most dentists don't offer the service of "sealing" patients' teeth with a clear bond to keep them airtight and, therefore, decay-proof.

His longtime friend, Dr. Tim Duke of Searcy, was an important exception. When Dr. Alcott needed dental care he visited Dr. Duke whom he greatly admired and treasured as a friend.

At age 56 George was playing touch football with his youngest son Doug and pulled a muscle in his arm. That day he decided he would never let himself get out of shape again and began a daily exercise program that lasted in age-appropriate phases until September 4th, 2011. He was jogging for exercise and adhering to a low-fat diet before it was cool. He abhorred the frivolities of excess, including new hats and new cars.

George lived a long life that was brilliant on several levels. He loved brilliantly and served brilliantly. He was the archetypal Southern gentleman, indeed one

of the last of his era. (You go, W.C.!) After the stroke in early September, although he could not verbally communicate, he kissed

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the hands of his caregivers as a way of showing his love and appreciation (or perhaps to persuade them to remove the many tubes so he could climb out of bed and escape!).

He loved communicating and constantly expanded his vocabulary by looking up words in a giant Webster's Dictionary; the same was true of his love for correct grammar. He loved music (classical, Big Band, Bing Crosby, congregational hymns, patriotic anthems, old gospel ballads, and George Gershwin). Every Sunday as long as he lived in Bald Knob, George sang in

the choir at The First United Methodist Church. In late January 2010 the Alcott homestead caught fire and burned to the ground. He then moved in with his youngest daughter, Helen Alcott DuBose of Little Rock, her husband Pat, five children, and two dogs. These months were some of the happiest of his life, as Helen helped her father get organized, buy dapper new clothing, and best some of his former bachelor's routines. Matthew Robison, a graduate student at Harding University, answered an ad in the newspaper expressing a desire to hire an "assistant." Matthew became much more than that, helping Dr. Alcott with his editorial writing, shopping for huge quantities of everything from Kleenex to Scotch tape at Walmart, sharing lunches and loud laughs with an almost familial bond.

The doctor said frequently that he was glad God allowed him to live so long, since he had so much to learn. Matthew helped him learn how to operate a computer, send emails, and program a cell phone. George was an old dog who loved learning new tricks; along with so many other achievements he was a gifted singer, lullaby composer, writer, and investor. He wrote many political editorials for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and had a three-year relationship with editor Steve Moore of the Wall Street Journal, who became endeared to his innovative thinking on world economics without ever knowing his advanced age.

Dr. Alcott had a magnificent memory for names and faces, quick to greet with his charming smile and two-handed shake, quick with a clever pun. Last Christmas during a medical checkup, a female physician asked him, "Doctor Alcott, have you fallen recently?" He paused and fired back, "Fallen in love?" He was always encouraging and heartening, living by the credo that "God never promised us it would be easy, but He promised He would always be with us." The doctor was quite fond of the parting phrase, "Have a nice day." For decades he was active in the Christian ministry of Gideons International, working with prison inmates and placing Bibles in hotels and other facilities. He supported two Ugandan orphans.

Rest in peace, George. May all your Christmases be white somewhere over the rainbow; and have a nice day!

* * *

Dr. George Edward Alcott is predeceased by his wife of 44 years, Billy June Forbes Alcott of Bald Knob; and an infant grandson Colin Forbes Alcott (born to Forbes and Jenna Alcott) of Houston, TX. He is survived by four children: George Forbes Alcott (Jenna) of Houston, TX; Cynthia Alcott Urich (Rich) of Fayetteville, AR; Helen Alcott DuBose (Pat) of Little Rock, AR; and Douglas Albert Alcott of Dallas, TX. His legacy also includes 12 grandchildren: Callison Edward Alcott (Joanna Hawkins) of Houston, Carey Alcott of Houston, and Madeline Alcott of Boston, MA; Anna Alcott Wise of Fayetteville, AR; Harris DuBose of Fayetteville, AR; Andrew DuBose of Arkadelphia, AR; Susan Victoria DuBose of Little Rock, Marie Claire DuBose of Little Rock, and Isaac Connor DuBose of Little Rock; Amanda Alcott Burks (Payne) of Champaign, IL; Adam Alcott of Austin, TX; Ali Alcott of Nashville, TN; and one great-granddaughter, Cedar June Alcott (three-year-old daughter of Cal and Joanna), of Houston, TX.

Services are as follows:

Visitation: Thursday, September 22, 4-6 p.m, Powell Funeral Home, Bald Knob.

Service: Friday, September 23, 10:30 a.m., First United Methodist Church in Bald Knob.

Interment: To follow funeral service in Shady Grove Cemetery.

Potluck Lunch: To follow interment at Fellowship Hall, First United Methodist Church in Bald Knob. Arrangements entrusted to Powell Funeral Home Bald Knob-Judsonia. www.powellfuneralhome.net

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Tribute Wall

RB

“ Isabel & I send our condolences to you and your family. Westfield, New Jersey

Robert & Isabel Burghardt - May 04, 2016 at 06:58 PM

LM

“ I will always remember "Uncle George" and how wonderful to me he was. I will remember the good times my family and I spent with the Alcotts. God bless you all in your time of grief. Larry McWherter

Lawrence McWherter - May 04, 2016 at 06:58 PM

MW

“ Forbes, Cyn, Helen, and Doug, I am so sorry for the loss of Dr. George. He was such a special, special person. I did not learn of his passing until Thursday and was unable to arrange to take off from work to attend today's service. My parents were in Jackson, TN with my mother's sister who is also gravely ill. Otherwise they certainly would have been at the service too. You were in all of our thoughts. I love the photo you chose of Dr. George. I was too little to remember him that way. I always remember him with admiration and love. He had such a kind, gentle manner and was always so thoughtful and caring of others. Sending prayers for comfort and strength to you all. God bless.

Mike and Janet (Clark) Wilson - May 04, 2016 at 06:58 PM

RB

“ Isabel & I send our condolences to you and your family.
Westfield, New Jersey

Robert & Isabel Burghardt - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM

DF

“ Forbes, Cynthia, Doug & Helen,

*Please accept our deepest sympathy upon the death of your father.
The love our parents,
Ruth & Earl McWherter had for your family continued to the end of
their lives.*

With love from

*Don & Kay Floyd
Children, Tad & Elizabeth*

Don Floyd & Kay McWherter Floyd - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM

LM

“ *I will always remember "Uncle George" and how wonderful to me he
was. I will remember the good times my family and I spent with the
Alcotts. God bless you all in your time of grief.*

Larry McWherter

Lawrence McWherter - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM

AH

“ *the Alcott family is in my thoughts and prayers. he was a wonderful
person.*

andria harrell - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM

WF

“ We have so many wonderful memories of shared times with your family ... trip to Dallas Cowboy games, vacation at Marble Falls, cookouts, Christmas caroling, and shooting fireworks on 4th of July. George was always kind and gracious. He had an encouraging word for everyone and took a genuine interest in each person's life. He was a good friend to me and I enjoyed our telephone conversations these past years. He will trully be missed.

W.C. Whitley and Family - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM

MW

“ Forbes, Cyn, Helen, and Doug,

I am so sorry for the loss of Dr. George. He was such a special, special person. I did not learn of his passing until Thursday and was unable to arrange to take off from work to attend today's service. My parents were in Jackson, TN with my mother's sister who is also gravely ill. Otherwise they certainly would have been at the service too. You were in all of our thoughts. I love the photo you chose of Dr. George. I was too little to remember him that way. I always remember him with admiration and love. He had such a kind, gentle manner and was always so thoughtful and caring of others. Sending prayers for comfort and strength to you all. God bless.

Mike and Janet (Clark) Wilson - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM

FB

“ Forbes, Cynthia, Helen, and Doug, Your father was such a gracious man, a true gentleman. I loved the way he acknowledged the accomplishments of young people by writing them a letter to let them know he appreciated their effort. Please know he is still present in each one of you. I feel lucky to have known him.

Frances Bridges - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM

LB

“ My mother was a clinic nurse for Dr. Hugh Edwards at Rogers Hospital in Searcy. Dr. Goznell had his dental practice in the Clinic. He took an extended leave and Dr. Alcott came several days a week to see his patients and that is how mother met him. Mother was serious when it came to health professionals. The dogs went to a vet in Memphis and my allergist was in Oklahoma City. This was in the 50's. Mother was so impressed with Dr. Alcott she started going to him and I saw him as a patient for the first time when I was 5. Every six months, until I married and moved away, I saw Dr. Alcott. He was very ahead of his time in so many ways. The very thought of a needle in my mouth terrified me and I stood my ground. Dr. Alcott discussed this with me when I needed my first filling. He understood my phobia and I understood it would hurt. He never put a needle in my mouth, and we had a signal. He would drill and I would touch his arm (gently) when I needed a break. it took forever, but he never tried to talk me into doing it any differently. He came up with a device to make it impossible to suck my thumb. He used space maintainers when nobody had ever heard of such a thing. He taught me to floss and I was rinsing my mouth after lunch at school in first grade. If you couldn't brush, rinse! I am 62 and still have molars with fillings he did. He had the first headphones with music I had ever seen. He would put them on me with classical music to drown out the sound of the drill. He wore a surgical mask and gloves at a time when dentists didn't do that. I know this is long, but he made such an impression on me as a child and I have such very fond memories of him. i've passed down the dental care he taught me to my grandchildren. He was a wonderful man.

Lana Liles Burns - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM

LS

“ *Helen and Family--*

So sorry to hear of your loss. I'm sure the memories of the many years of a well lived life; and the most recent memories made in your home will sustain you through this sad time. Know you have many who hold all of you in their thoughts and prayers. Leah Oakes Seagraves

Leah Oakes Seagraves - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM

MW

“ *I cannot express enough how much respect I had for Dr. Alcott. He was such an extraordinary man, with a warm heart, passion for learning and love for family and friends. So sorry for all the family and how blessed they have been to have someone of his presence play such a large part in many lives. Sincerely...Mike Wallace*

Mike Wallace - February 10, 2016 at 04:47 PM