



## John Elliott Bell, M.D.

November 15, 1936 - May 16, 2022

John Elliott Bell, M.D., known simply as “J Bell” to all who knew him, passed away on May 16, 2022, in Searcy, Arkansas. His admirers are legion.

Born November 15, 1936, to Albert and Lillie Mae Bell, J grew up in Camden with his brother, Thomas “T” Bell. The brothers raised rabbits, became Eagle Scouts, and allegedly derailed a train. J graduated high school in 1954 and followed T to the University of Arkansas, where he joined Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity and enrolled at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences at the age of 20. During this time, he met his future wife, Jane Huggins, and they shared a wonderful life together over the next six decades.

After graduation, marriage, and the birth of their first son, Brad, J and Jane struck out for west Texas, where they lived in a community called Quanah and welcomed another son, Jack. J and Jane always spoke fondly of Quanah and their friends there. J was especially proud of the hundreds of babies he delivered from all over the panhandle region and was honored that some of his patients chose to name their sons after him. Home called, and J returned to Arkansas for the birth of a third son, John, and a radiology internship at UAMS. This changed the course of his life and the history of Searcy. At UAMS, J met a young doctor named Robert Elliott, who invited J and Jane to move to Searcy and begin a radiology practice. At that point, the hospitals in Searcy were essentially “way stations,” where patients were triaged and sent to Little Rock for treatment. The addition of surgical services with doctors like Dr. Porter Rodgers, Jr. and Dr. Jim Simpson, coupled with the diagnostic

services offered by Dr. Bell and Dr. Elliott, changed the face of the medical community. The level of care available in Searcy today is the direct result of bold decisions made by a group of young doctors in the late 1960's.

A lesser physician could be forgiven for his lack of skill if he had J Bell's bedside manner. A foul-tempered doctor could be forgiven for his lack of a bedside manner if he had J Bell's medical skills. Thousands of patients owe their lives and health to Dr. Bell's fierce intellect and gentle nature. In an age when people are often told that they need to come in to talk to their doctor about their test results, folks in Searcy were likely to find Dr. Bell knocking on their doors to tell them what was happening and, more importantly, to make sure they understood and were comforted.

The first CARTI facility outside of Little Rock was built in Searcy as a result of the efforts of Drs. Bell, Elliott, and Rodgers, who were the originators of the idea and prompted CARTI to expand. As a result, countless patients have been able to receive cancer care in their hometown instead of traveling to Little Rock. Dr. Bell and Dr. Elliott purchased the third Elscint CT scanner sold west of the Mississippi. Together, they helped create the future of diagnostic medicine in Arkansas. Joining them in that effort were a host of dedicated employees at Arkansas Radiology Group, P.A. They are too numerous to name, but they were all considered family, and most of the team never worked anywhere else.

Dr. Bell was a professor at UAMS and a Fellow of the American College of Radiology. He was appointed by then-Governor Bill Clinton to the Arkansas State Medical Board, and he served for fifteen years, also under Governors Tucker, Huckabee, and Beebe. Humble to his core, when his friend Governor Beebe called to reappoint him, J advised that he had been honored to serve as long as he had, and he asked the Governor to appoint Dr. Jim Citty to replace him. The governor acted on this advice. J also served in the Arkansas Army National Guard, retiring as a Captain.

A die-hard Razorback, J was a Broyles-Matthews Scholarship donor to the

Razorback Foundation and rarely missed a game. The recent success of the Razorbacks was a highlight of the final years of his life. He enjoyed golf, hunting, and other recreational pursuits, but his family and friends were his greatest joys. Daddy J and Mama Jane loved their grandkids, and nothing pleased them more than when the entire crew came for "Mama Jane's Fun Camp." J and Jane traveled the world. In 2000, they were able to dance on the White House lawn during an event hosted by President Clinton and marveled at what a remarkable life they had led together and how far they had come.

Left to honor his memory are Brad Bell; Jack Bell and Amy Bell; John Bell (Lindsey); his grandchildren, and a host of nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, and his beloved wife. The family wishes to thank caregiver Cyndi Ellis, Hospice nurses Sonia and Christina, the staff of Arkansas Hospice, and all of the friends and admirers who came to visit J in the last few weeks. The family will receive visitors on Thursday, May 19, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, and a service of remembrance is set for Friday, May 20, at 11:00 am. Both will be held at First Presbyterian Church, 400 West Arch Ave., Searcy, Arkansas. Memorials may be made to the CARTI Foundation at PO Box 55011, Little Rock, Arkansas 72215.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

MAY **19**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church  
400 West Arch Avenue  
Searcy, AR 72143

## Celebration of Life Service

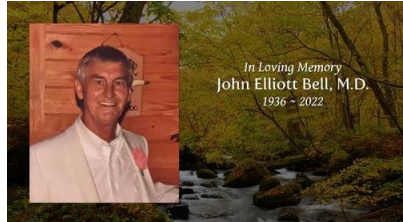
MAY **20**. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church  
400 West Arch Avenue  
Searcy, AR 72143

# Tribute Wall



“ Powell Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of John Elliott Bell, M.D.



Powell Funeral Home & Cremation Services - May 18, 2022 at 01:53 PM

MH

*I am so honored to have worked for Dr. Bell for many years. He was such a wonderful boss and friend. Everybody looked forward to his hugs which he freely gave to everyone. He was one of the most intelligent people I have ever met. He was amazing.*

Mary Ann Hancock - May 19, 2022 at 10:20 PM

DR

“ I met Jay when He was in Med School. To use one word to describe Jay, it would be the “nicest”. But he went much farther than that with his skills in medicine and his care and compassion. Jay will be respected and remembered for decades.

Draxie Horm Rogers - May 20, 2022 at 12:22 AM

SP

“ What a wonderful person and Dr he was. I feel honored that I was able to work with him throughout the 1990s. My prayers for his family.

Sissy Putt - May 19, 2022 at 05:13 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of John Elliott Bell, M.D..*



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May 19, 2022 at 02:38 PM



“ *J. And Jane were my best friends for 50 years. He was the most caring, wonderful and gentle man. I loved him dearly!*

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**Jawanda Pulliam Smith** - May 19, 2022 at 10:05 AM



“ *One of life's pleasures is being in life of people like J Bell! A doctor who made house calls with love! A true gentleman! Thank you Jay, love Regina and Dennis Bennett*

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**Dennis Bennett** - May 19, 2022 at 09:48 AM



“ *I met J when I worked at Leslie Jewelers. He was always so nice and pleasant to all of us. In recent years I'd see him at Searcy Health Corp on the walking track and we would visit for a little bit while we walked. I know he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.*

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**Barbara Steward** - May 19, 2022 at 09:12 AM

JM

“ J has been a wonderful friend for many years. Not only a friend, but, a caring doctor throughout the years, I cherish each of those memories. We have had many discussipns about life and death in the past years. I know he is in a better, happy place with Jane and many others now RIP my wonderful,compassionate friend. Bob and I loved you with all of our heart.



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**Judy Maddox** - May 19, 2022 at 07:15 AM

JP

“ In 1992, I worked at then WCMH in the radiology department and medical records. I typed many a report dictated by Dr. Bell. When my husband died, he came to my house, in his scrubs, to express his condolences. And always in the years following, I got a hug from him where ever I saw him.

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**Judy Perry** - May 18, 2022 at 06:44 PM

SH

“ I have known Dr. Bell since 1989. He was a good man and his hugs were the best. Prayers for his family and friends.

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**Sonja Hauge** - May 18, 2022 at 05:29 PM