



Dr. Alva Dean Cook Jr.

July 19, 1925 - May 25, 2017

Alva Dean Cook, Jr. was born on July 19, 1925, in the US Military Hospital in the town of Baguio, on the Island of Luzon in the Philippines. He passed away peacefully at Aldersgate Village on May 25, 2017, surrounded by his family.

Late in life he liked to say, "I was conceived in China and born in the Philippines". This saying reflects his upbringing in a missionary family whose medical missionary work was conducted in both countries. This missionary upbringing was reflected throughout his life as a devout Christian and a dedicated servant to his community.

His mother and father settled in Dayton, Ohio. In Dayton, he was a star athlete at Fairmont High School and graduated at the top of his class in 1943. He attended Williams College under the Navy's V-12 program to be trained as a medical doctor. He continued his V-12 training by attending medical school at Loyola (Chicago) School of Medicine. He interned at the Cook County Hospital.

While in Chicago, he met the love of his life, nursing cadet, Ruth Peterson. They were married in Chicago on June 11, 1949. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Ruth; his sons, John (Jelane), and Robert (Ratna); his four grandchildren, Andrew, Sarah, Fiona and Ian (Maddie). Dean was preceded in death by his parents, sisters, older brother and his beloved son, Dean III.

Upon being commissioned as a Navy Doctor, he served his country during the Korean War in Washington D.C. and San Diego. After his separation from the Navy, he returned to Dayton and worked with his father, Alva Dean Cook, in general practice. Dean left general practice and completed a psychiatric residency at the Menninger Clinic and took a position practicing psychiatry at the Colmery O'Neil VA Medical Center. At the VA, he continued to serve his country for 30 years by providing psychiatric help to the veterans of WWII, Korea and Vietnam. After retiring from the VA, he continued his life of service by taking a psychiatric position with the Pawnee Mental Health Services in Manhattan and Junction City. He was much loved by the staff and the patients he came in contact with. He was often quoted as saying "it was the best job I ever had".

Dean's greatest service to his community came after losing his middle son, Alva Dean, III, to AIDS in 1991. Dean and Ruth became very active members of PFLAG and provided AIDS education to professionals, parents and student throughout Topeka and Kansas. Dean and Ruth provided priceless support to the gay community, by becoming surrogate parents to those members who had been rejected by their families and round the clock support for parents in crisis.

His passions in life, outside of community service, included singing with the Williams College Octet during their reunions and gardening. Dean achieved the status of a Shawnee County Master Gardener and was very proud of the shade gardens he carved out of the Shunganunga Creek wilderness.

Friends, colleagues and patients knew Dean as a compassionate, kind, cheerful, gentleman of great intelligence, humility and humor. His ability to care for, talk to and help anyone at anytime enriched the lives of everyone fortunate enough to have known him.

A celebration of Dean's life will be at 10:30 a.m. on June 10, 2017, at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 3625 SW Wanamaker Road, Topeka KS 66614. The family will receive guests prior to the service beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Inurnment will be private in Penwell-Gabel Cemetery.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Prince of Peace Building Fund, sent in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

Cemetery Details

Penwell-Gabel Cemetery

3616 SW 6th Street
Topeka, KS 66606

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 10. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
3625 SW Wanamaker Road
Topeka, KS 66614

A Celebration of Life

JUN 10. 10:30 AM (CT)

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
3625 SW Wanamaker Road
Topeka, KS 66614

Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. Alva Dean Cook Jr.*

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ *Ruth--so sorry to hear about Dean. I met the two of you on more than one occasion when we had panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt in Manhattan. My thoughts are with you and your family.*

Kevin Stilley

Kevin Stilley - June 09, 2017 at 01:37 PM



“ *So sad to hear about Dr.Cooks passing.I helped Dean and Ruth with their shopping at Eddie Bauer for years.what a wonderful couple. I really enjoyed Dean's sence of humor.my prayers are with your family. Janice Hudson.*

Janice Hudson - June 09, 2017 at 08:33 AM

MI

“ I had the privilege of singing in the POP choir with Dean for several years. I know how much he enjoyed raising his voice to praise the Lord. He was always so positive and kind. He truly had a love for his Lord.

Ruth, we will be praying for you and the rest of the family as you grieve Dean's death. He was such a great Christian man that is rejoicing with our Lord now. We will miss him. Comfort, peace and love to you Ruth.

-Michael, Kim, Brayden and Jordan White

Michael - June 08, 2017 at 06:58 PM

DG

“ I am heartbroken to hear of this, although I know that Dean is loving being reunited with Dean III. Dean and Ruth have been beacons of light in AIDS service work from the early days and Positive Connections has lost a great supporter just as the community has lost a caring and gentle man and Ruth has lost a loving husband. Ruth, our thoughts are with you and your family as we all remember Dean and his amazing contributions to our community.

*Debbie Guilbault
Positive Connections (Topeka AIDS Project)
Staff and Board*

Debbie Guilbault - June 08, 2017 at 08:52 AM



“ *Dean and Ruth are two amazing people I've been blessed to know!
They both treat me like family!
Dean was an awesome individual, and he will be deeply missed.*

He's now with everyone he loved all day, everyday!

Allie Galvin - June 07, 2017 at 08:39 PM



“ *Ruth,
May the healing gifts of time and the timeless love of God carry you
gently through the loss you're feeling now.
You are the model of what a loving wife & daughter should be. I
watched you love, comfort and care for your mom. I saw you stand
by Dr Cook & see him through. Not to mention you are a very pretty
woman to boot! You also always found kind, supportive comforting
words & smiles for me the last 40 years. That is priceless.*

*I continually thought of you and the example you set as I cared for
my mom in my home the last 5yrs until she passed away exactly
one year ago today. Your demonstrated generosity of spirit in every
way will be rewarded.*

*As you grieve the loss of your husband, praying God will comfort
you and bless the memories your heart holds.*

*With Prayers, Love & Sympathy,
Pamela Johnson Betts*

Pamela Johnson Betts - June 07, 2017 at 08:24 AM



“ *Dean was such a gentle soul. He always has a big smile, exuded
patience and was always so pleasant to be around. Bob and I miss
seeing Dean and Ruth in our store and want to offer your family our
most sincere sympathy in your loss. Thoughts, prayers and hugs
being sent your way.*

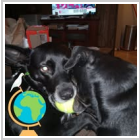
Kristen White - June 07, 2017 at 08:24 AM

PD

“ Ruth,
Thinking and praying for you. Cara and I always loved running into you and Dean. Our politics were right in line (or maybe Left). You guys had a wonderful life together. May he rest in peace. God Bless you.

Patty Dick
Cara Christianson

Patty Dick - May 31, 2017 at 01:25 PM



“ Dean will miss your wit and kindness. Thanks Dean for just being you. I will miss you terribly but, I know you are with our Lord. How glorious that moment must have been.

Margaret Carreno - May 28, 2017 at 05:05 PM

DT

“ So sorry, many fond memories.
Sincerely,
Doris and Pete

Doris and Pete Tarnower - May 28, 2017 at 11:58 AM

ML

“ Dean will always be my favorite PURPLE COW.
Love & hugs to you Ruth <3 Mariah Greeson-Landsaw



Mariah Greeson Landsaw - May 26, 2017 at 08:03 AM