

# Celebrating A Life Well-Lived

By Cathy Tyson



Dr. Jeff Holmes

On Saturday August 4, family and friends gathered at the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints to pay their respects to James Gordon Holmes, MD. Dr. Holmes was remembered for his drive, boundless energy, can-do attitude and pursuit of learning according to his son Jeffrey Taggart Holmes. He was a physician, businessman, professor, husband, father and grandfather, brother, traveler and quiet philanthropist. He is survived by his widow,

Ernestine Holmes, remaining five children; James Gordon Holmes, Jr. of Danville, Dr. Jeff Holmes of Monte Sereno, John Holmes, Attorney of Encinitas, Dr. Alexander Holmes of Salinas and Elizabeth Holmes Talley of Danville, and 12 grandchildren. His two brothers, Samuel and Richard (Dick) both live in Lafayette.

He grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, attending West High School, where he was student body president. He graduated from the University of Utah, and Stanford University Medical School.

At Stanford, the government paid for his tuition and books and even gave him \$50 a month in exchange for his ROTC commitment. After graduation he served as a captain in the U.S. Army Air Corp.

Dr. Holmes raised his family in Lafayette, then a very small, semi-rural community. Unhappy with the way the county was running then unincorporated Lafayette; he was elected to first City Council in 1968.

His brother Dick Holmes joked that Gordon lost a drawing among the brothers, so he was the one to run for Mayor. He won, becoming the second mayor of Lafayette. Keep in mind he was a practicing surgeon at Alta Bates Hospital with five young children at home at the time.


His interests were many and clearly wide-ranging. In the late 1970's he volunteered to help at United Nations High Commission for Refugee Relief in Thailand, at Ban Nam Yao and Maejorim camps. For more than a decade, Dr. Holmes was a Professor of Human Anatomy at UC Berkeley. Later in life he developed two commercial real estate ventures and one condominium project in Lafayette.

At the service his son spoke of his generosity. He had recently funded a clinic that will serve the desperately poor of twenty rural villages in the mountains near Machu Pichu, Peru. He anonymously paid for a wood floor of the church gymnasium. These were just a few of his many acts of charity.

Dr. Holmes' widow, Ernestine Workman Holmes, tearfully recalled, "he was the love of my life," at the service.

Two charming granddaughters remembered Grandpa as a kind-hearted soul who took time for them individually, selecting special birthday presents and attending countless sports and school events. He invited the grandkids to come to his Happy Valley home pick apples and make applesauce. He even went so far as to take all of his girl grandkids on a special trip.

Son James Gordon Holmes, Jr., recalled at the service that his Dad could be considered a successful man. "You come into this world naked and go out naked, the measure of a life is how you treat people, your relationships." By that measure, and in looking around the capacity crowd at church, Dr. Holmes was truly a successful man.



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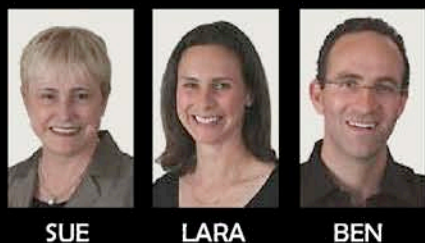
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