



Dr. John I. F. Knud-Hansen

March 3, 1919 - October 24, 2012

John Ingolf Flemmer Knud-Hansen, MD, USN, Ret. passed away Oct. 24, 2012 at his home on Harleigh Lane in Oxford. He was 93. He was among the most beloved and respected physicians on the Eastern Shore, a dedicated veteran of the US Navy, and a loyal member of clubs and organizations that support health and human services.

Born March 3, 1919 in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Dr. Knud-Hansen was the second son of Knud Knud-Hansen, MD, a Danish-born physician who visited the Danish West Indies in 1903, and decided to settle there permanently in 1907. He arrived on board the Danish trawler, Ingolf, established a public medical practice with another physician, and together they provided nearly all the medical care for all three of the islands owned by Denmark. The first hospital on St. Thomas was named the Knud Knud-Hansen Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Knud-Hansen married the daughter of Dutch West Indians, Terese “Ruby” Hassell in 1915, and just as St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix were being sold to the United States, his first son, James Angul Flemmer Knud-Hansen was born Nov. 7, 1917...John Ingolf Flemmer Knud-Hansen was born March 3, 1919. Therefore, they both were born American citizens, and as such, his father proclaimed on the day the US took over the islands, “I am now an American; we will not speak Danish again.”

John I. F. Knud-Hansen was educated in St. Thomas and the British-run Boys Grammar School in Antigua until 1938, when he and his brother Jim earned

scholarships to Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. They both graduated in 1943; Jim enlisted in the US Army and served as an infantryman in Sicily and Palermo; John enlisted in the US Navy/Marines expedited medical school program, graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1945, and in uniform ready for service.

Dr. John Knud-Hansen married Fredonia (Fritzi) Fulton Gephart, in her hometown of Pittsburgh, PA Feb. 3, 1945. A few months later, he was assigned to the Pacific Island of Saipan, where the US had established a Japanese POW camp. The ugliness of war did not escape him, but he thrived in the Navy, making many friendships that lasted 50 or more years.

After the war, Dr. Knud-Hansen embarked on a 21 year career with the U.S. Navy Medical Corps, in Philadelphia, Memphis, TN, Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, CA, Bethesda, MD, Boston, Annapolis and finally Charleston, SC. During that time, he and Fritzi raised four children, John, Erik , Chris and Emilie.

He retired from active duty in 1964 and moved to Easton to establish a private practice as a general surgeon at the Memorial Hospital of Easton. At various times, he served as Chief of Staff and Chief of Surgery, as well as president of the American Cancer Society of the Eastern Shore.

On the recreational side, Dr. Knud-Hansen loved to read, and enjoy sports. He was an accomplished swimmer and tennis player in his earlier years, and was an ever-optimistic golfer, cursing the game on a regular basis. He was a past member and officer of the Talbot Country Club, a dedicated member of the Tred Avon Yacht Club, and a past Commodore of the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club, where he was one of the most beloved (and cursed) poker and gin rummy players in club history. He held a deep respect and affection for the employees of those clubs.

Though not of Scottish blood, Dr. Knud-Hansen had a longtime enjoyment of Scottish country dancing, which he and his wife Fritzi taught locally, and spent several summers in St. Andrews, Scotland, to hone their dancing (and golfing) skills. He was a past president of the local St. Andrews Society, and as a

proud Norseman, was a founding member of the Leif Ericson Society International.

Dr. Knud-Hansen also partnered with the late Douglas Hanks of Oxford by helping to underwrite the construction of Hanks' crab skiff, The Slippery Eel. While never a boat owner, except a canoe named knu, Dr. Knud-Hansen was an avid sailor who, over the years, sailed on several Newport-Bermuda races, Charleston, SC to Brazil race, and two trans-Atlantic races: 1966 Bermuda to Denmark and 1972 Bermuda to Spain. His primary crew responsibilities were doctor and cook, at which he excelled. In his final years, he was happy to sit on the second floor deck at the TAYC watching Friday night sailing races. In 1991, Dr. Knud-Hansen's wife of 46 years passed away after a battle with leukemia. During the long days of Fritz's hospitalization, Dr. Knud-Hansen was inspired to begin writing his memories of growing up in the Virgin Islands....much like his father had written a book describing his decision to move From Denmark to the Virgin Islands. After his wife's death, he visited the islands and wrote a few more chapters.

In a marvelous twist of fate, he fell in love with Merrillyn Slack, herself widowed three years earlier when her husband of 46 years also died of leukemia. To the immense delight of all of their children, John and Merrillyn were married in 1993 and enjoyed 19 wonderful years together. Both of them expressed pride in "being able to do marriage right!" It was Merrillyn who inspired Dr. Knud-Hansen to finish and publish *Island Memories and Later Years* in 1999.

In addition to his beloved wife Merrillyn, Dr. Knud-Hansen is survived by his sons, John P. Knud-Hansen, MD of Easton, J. Erik Knud-Hansen of Hawaii, Christopher F. Knud-Hansen, Ph.D. of Boulder, CO and daughter Emilie, of Oxford; and his Knud-Hansen grandchildren, Grant, Colin, Drew, Brent and Marissa, and Chelsea and Kayla Coleman; Mrs. Knud-Hansen's family, The Slacks, also survive the doctor, Steve Slack, of Denver, Srimati Kamala of Bethesda, Susan Skinner of Ellicott City and Sherri Koelbel of Denver, CO., and their spouses; plus many children, grandchildren; and one great-grand

child. The mutual admiration between the Knud-Hansens and the Slacks has grown everlasting due to the incredible love story of our parents.

Also acknowledged with love and gratitude are the family home keeper Vicky Winstead of Denton and physical trainer Carrie Edelman of Royal Oak, lovingly contributing to the physical comfort and longevity for both Dr. & Mrs. Knud-Hansen. The family also wishes to thank Home Instead Senior Care for their compassionate and dedicated staff over such a brief period of time, and the Shore Home Health Care Hospice.

A graveside service will be held at 1 pm, Saturday, November 3 at Oxford Cemetery. A reception at the Tred Avon Yacht Club will follow. The public is invited.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to either the Memorial Hospital of Easton Foundation, 121 Federal St. Ste. 2, Easton, MD 21601 OR Talbot Hospice Foundation, 586 Cynwood Dr. Easton, MD 21601.

Cemetery Details

Oxford Cemetery

Oxford, MD

Previous Events

Service

NOV 3. 1:00 PM (ET)

Oxford Cemetery
Oxford, MD

Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. John I. F. Knud-Hansen*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Dr. John I. F. Knud-Hansen*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Dr. John I. F. Knud-Hansen*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *In 1966 our infant first-born son needed surgery to live. We were pastoring a small church, and had no medical insurance or money. The evening before surgery, Dr Knud-Hansen so very kindly encouraged us that all would work out well and we believed him. It did work out well as the skillful hands of this caring doctor saved our son's life. To top it all off, Dr Knud-Hansen mark our bill with him, "paid in full". For more than 46 years we have remembered Dr. Hnud-Hansen's gift to us and have spoken to thousands of people of his tremendous generosity. He will never be forgotten in our family as we past down this history from generation to generation. We are saddened by his death.*

B. Gene & Ruth Ann Cecil

B. Gene & Ruth Ann Cecil - November 05, 2012 at 06:42 AM

PF

“ *Dr. Knud-Hansen was someone for whom I had the greatest respect, as a member of our church, a prominent physician and a fine person. I am sure that my parents were waiting to greet him to continue the friendship they began here.
My thoughts and prayers are with his family.*



Philip Carey Foster - October 25, 2012 at 01:35 PM

SK

“ *Sue L Knight lit a candle in memory of Dr. John I. F. Knud-Hansen*



sue I knight - October 25, 2012 at 09:31 AM

SK

Dr Knud-Hansen and my late grandfather, Virgil Maxwell were great friends. I can only imagine the conversations they must be having today. My thoughts and prayers are with the family.

Sue L. Knight

sue I knight - October 25, 2012 at 09:35 AM

KR

*Dr. Knud-Hansen was a wonderful teacher, doctor and person. He will be missed by all that knew him.
Karen Russum*

karen russum - October 25, 2012 at 08:10 PM

DH

Dr. Knud-Hansen was a wonderful surgeon and teacher. I worked on Med-surg and then the IV Team in the 1980's. Enjoyed talking with him and I could tell he truly cared for his patients.

Diane Harrison - October 26, 2012 at 05:41 PM



*My name is Peter Taillie and I was a patient of Dr. Knud-Hansen before he passed. I am sorry for his passing. I would like to access my records regarding my care with him. Can you point me in some direction
Thanks, Peter Taillie ptaillie13@gmail.com 443 262 6165*

Peter Taillie - July 09, 2024 at 01:55 PM