



## Joe C. O'Banion Sr.

December 29, 1927 - May 13, 2022

Dr. Joe C. O'Banion Sr. passed peacefully to his Savior at home in Vancouver Washington on the evening of May 13, 2022 at 94 years of age. He was born in 1927 in Mexia Texas and is survived by

his older sister Mary Allen, his only son Joe, and his four adult grandchildren Colleen, Joseph, Sean and Kevin O'Banion.

As his son, I've written this from my first hand perspective of what his life was like, living each day

with him and from impressions from others. If I had to summarize his life I would say it was one of

keeping his promises. Like all promises they are bounded by things outside of our control such as God

ordained timing. But concerning things within our control, his life was uniquely marked as one of

keeping his vows and promises. Vows to his marriage to his wife of 66 years, vows to his profession to

"do no harm" for his patients, and other promises he kept in his selfless dedication to others whether they were living or in death.

He considered himself blessed to have grown up in a small town during a time in life that was reflected

by strong moral and godly values. Dad went into the Navy during the Korean War conflict where he met his future wife Lois Rowlands who out-ranked him at Oakland Naval Hospital, who trained both he, and his best friend Walt Fehlman, in operating room standards and procedures. Then he was aboard ship on the USS Boxer as a medical corpsman for the last two years of his service during the war. After leaving the Navy in December 1952, and Lois leaving in December of 1953, they were married on January 10th 1953. Mom helped support him during his years in medical school and internship. He would often joke that he was initially a music major but decided it was too hard of a carrier, especially when faced with teaching young children, so he became a doctor instead. Becoming a doctor was really what he wanted to do from an early age but didn't think he could afford the schooling. He graduated from The University of Texas as a Doctor of Medicine in June of 1958. In June of 1959 I was born. Although he specialized in Family Practice if you asked him he would often say he was just a "country doctor". In Texas he would often be on-call 24/7 making house calls throughout the local community, to homes that often didn't even have street addresses. He never drew any distinctions between people and would treat all his patients with equal compassion and care. In the mid sixties he was encouraged to visit Redding California by his Navy buddy Walt Fehlman and fell in love with the area and moved out West. Dad then had the ability to rotate his patient load with other Doctors

for the first time.

As a doctor he was devoted to his profession, loved his patients, and enjoyed his work. He served on

many local hospital boards was honored with many awards. Many of the Specialists liked him because

he would often "send them patients that they could actually do something about", meaning even though

he was in General Practice he would often recognize ailments that most might miss. Sometimes these

ailments were so rare that even the specialists had never seen them before in decades of their own

practice. This was credited to his excellent memory from his medical school days and constant study

back in his den for hours each night. This was often after he been called out in the middle of the night

to assist in a medical emergency or surgery, gotten a few hours of sleep, was up early in the morning to

make rounds at the hospitals, worked all day at his office, and come home late that evening. Many

Surgeons asked dad to assist them in their surgeries. Dad was constantly investigating treatments for

various ailments. He would never discount non-traditional therapies, even those that might be

considered "home remedies" that were 100's of years old because as he put it "they often worked". I

can remember one topical treatment that had a particularly pungent smell, when his wife questioned

what that awful smell was, Dad had to confess that he was trying something out on himself before he

would ever suggest it on one of his patients. Even in his 90's he took regular

yearly testing and even kept his medical license in California current up until his stroke. His wife would always have lunch packed for him to take to work each day and a hot meal waiting for him when he arrived home. Mom as a Registered Nurse and Dad worked together as an excellent team in the office. He would often just have to hold out his hand, without a word being said, and she would place the appropriate instrument in it as he was tending to his patients. Like many older doctors, later in life he developed almost a "sixth sense" for knowing what ailed a patient. He could often just look at them, and know what might be the problem, do the appropriate diagnostic tests and determine the next method of treatment or which Specialist they should see next. Almost every week I saw him extend the lives of many of his patients by decades, from potentially life threatening ailments that were caught early. Dad would always say that he never healed anyone, but that only God could heal.

He was an excellent husband and father, was loving, kind, calm, devoted, always in a positive mood and constantly encouraging those around him. His life exemplified many Godly attributes which made it easy to understand how a Heavenly Father could love us so unconditionally. He was always willing to listen if you had a concern or question and his advice was always devoid of criticism and seasoned with wise counsel. I never remember him getting mad or angry, although occasionally he would chuckle to himself when he gave a response, looking back I realized the

humor from it in my somewhat infantile questions. As he often said that no question was a dumb question. When asked about what I should do for things such as a choice of carriers he would just say that he didn't care what I chose, even if it was ditch digging, just as long as I was happy. Mom however wasn't so understanding and would suggest other carrier paths such as the medical field! I knew that whatever I chose I wanted to have the same dedication to it as Dad had for his profession, and I finally found that in an Engineering profession. Later in life however Dad was happy, meaning objective happiness, that I didn't chose to go into the medical profession due to the way it was changing and what it had become. He was loved by many who knew him, worked with him, and who were his patients. He took care of a very large number of entire families throughout the northern California region. At his office his active patient files extended from floor to ceiling by roughly 12 feet wide behind the office staff. His inactive patient files occupied most of a back office room as well. People would drive for an hour just to bring their families to see him as their physician. Later in his life I remember walking with him when we went out in Redding and I thought I was with some celebrity. It was rare when someone didn't come up to him, give him a hug, say how much they missed him and how they wished he was still in practice. How they hadn't been able to find another doctor like him. Dad would just smile and ask how their family

members or other acquaintances were doing now. He remembered them all in detail. He would often comment how he missed seeing his patients when he left his practice. When I worked down at his office on occasion I would see that as well. It seemed like the very old and the very young (and of course Airline pilots) were often his favorites. It was common for the entire office staff to be laughing when some cute comment was made by a 3 yr old, or a 95 yr old patient. But he loved and cared for them all equally.

When I brought my girl friend, and future wife Sandra Nepveux, home for them to meet for the first time I remember asking Dad in private what he thought of her... his response was priceless, "Son, do I have to hit you over the head with a 2x4?!" That was the first time I'd ever heard him give such a blunt answer. Of course they liked her! Sandra has been the absolute best daughter-in-law anyone could have hoped for and has loved Dad tremendously throughout our 32 years of marriage.

Mom and Dad both were rooted in their Christian faith early in their marriage. They attended excellent Bible believing churches in Texas. This continued when they moved to Redding California, but as typically happens many mainline Protestant churches gradually became spiritually cold. They lost their first love and morphed into apostasy. They didn't really have a chance to experience a church grounded in the Word of God till they moved up to Vancouver / Portland area later in life.

I moved them up to Vancouver Washington later in 2017 to help take care of them in their aging years. They had both started to suffer falls in their original house and I was concerned that they were an 8 hour drive away. Little did I know this move had important timing since the Northern California area was shortly after hit with a number of fires, that would have left them without a place to live for over a month at a time if they had stayed. Some of these fires came within roughly 150 feet in back of their house. This move also allowed their original home to become a refuge for several families of former patients after that, who's homes were destroyed in successive fires throughout the county in future years. During the last 1.5 years of Mom's life she was diagnosed with Severe Dementia and Dad faithfully took care of her in Vancouver. Dad still loved her even when she didn't always know who we were. When I would ask her who Dad was she might say with a smile, "I don't know... but I live with him". After Mom's death Dad poured himself into the Word of God each day, and grew closer to his LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. He was the one that always wanted to attend each and every church service, twice in the morning and once in the evening. He wanted to attend Gary Custis's Bible Institute each Tuesday night at Hill Crest Chapel, and did so up until Covid hit. Then when it started back up at Trinity Bible Church he attended each and every Tuesday night. Additionally Dad tried to do the weekly Bible Study on-line Wednesday

evening in preparation for Sunday. This was the first time in decades of living in Redding that I

remember Dad having and taking the time to do a proper Bible Study each week. Dad always exhibited

his faith and his nature showed it, but it was such a blessing to see him later in life grow so much in his

hunger for the Word of God and knowledge of the Lord.

Just after Thanksgiving in 2021 Dad suffered a stroke which left him partially incapacitated and unable

to walk on his own. He went from being completely independent to having to depend upon me for his

daily needs. For the last 5 & ½ months of his life I was with him each day between 6 to 10 hours,

mostly split between the morning and evening. During this time he was gradually getting better, his

speech and cognitive abilities returned, but his stamina and strength were lacking, he still couldn't walk

without assistance so he was wheelchair bound. I cherished each and every day I could spend with him

and we enjoyed our time together. I learned that the same love and effort we put into our children's

lives we should also naturally put into the lives of our aging parents. That effort is not wasted and it

was such a blessing to myself and others around me that knew and loved Dad. He was a remarkable

man who led a remarkable life, who was a blessing to others, he will be missed on this earth and yet

rejoiced by us knowing he is at peace with God and with his LORD and Savior.

Phil. 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. " Memories of Dr. Joe can be left at the web

site <https://www.evergreenmemorialgardens.com/obituaries>

<https://tbcpx.org/tapeindex.php> <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AjuLqt-n---2hFXetmKk6-o0lcul?e=WrlTKt>

# Tribute Wall



“ Evergreen Memorial Gardens created a Tribute Video in memory of Joe C. O'Banion Sr.



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**Evergreen Memorial Gardens** - May 13, 2022 at 12:00 AM

VP

“ Joe i am so sorry for your loss, its July of 2024 and i was trying to locate you and ran across your dads obituary, your parents were amazing, and of course your dad was my doctor for a short time.

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**Virgil Pugh** - July 08, 2024 at 12:00 AM

FO

“ Joe C. O'Banion Sr.

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**Funeral Home Owner** - May 31, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JO

“ Please do not send flowers or plant a tree. No need. Please post a memory if you knew Dr. Joe though. That is probably the best way to honor his memory. - Joe O'Banion Jr.

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**Joe OBanion** - May 27, 2022 at 12:00 AM

CP

“ Memory eternal!

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**Charles Paugh** - May 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AL

“ With loving memories of uncle "Bubba". Jim and I are so sorry for your loss.

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**Alice Sexton Lentz** - May 21, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AO

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Funeral Chapel and Crematory

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**A Memorial Tree was planted for Joe C. O'Banion** - May 19, 2022 at 12:00 AM