



LeRoy Shaw

June 7, 1930 - September 23, 2020

LeRoy Bert Shaw, M.D., M.P.H. passed away on the morning of Wednesday, September 23rd, 2020 at the age of 90. LeRoy, known to friends and family as Lee or Dr. Shaw, led a brilliant and successful life, and he touched many people with his affability, humility, empathy, optimism, insight, and resolve. Lee was born on June 7th, 1930 in Navasota, TX, the youngest son of Fannie Tabakin and Ben Shaw. Fannie and Ben were immigrants to the United States from Lithuania, and Lee grew up in small-town rural Texas as a first-generation American, the son of those seeking refuge from violence and religious persecution in Eastern Europe. His family owned and operated a dry goods store where Lee and his older brother Lionel assisted customers and gained an early strong work ethic. In his later years Lee would often return to Navasota through his storytelling and reminiscing about his time spent working as a soda jerk during the Second World War serving up the local town favorite, Victory Vanilla -- no cream, no sugar. Another early Navasota experience - rescuing an injured dog he would later adopt and name Bosco - led him to pursue a degree in medicine.

Lee was a good student and graduated as the salutatorian of Navasota High School. He attended Texas A&M University where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry with Honors. He was also a member of the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M, and later a member of the U.S. Army Reserve. After A&M he applied to medical schools across Texas, and he gained admission to all of the schools to which he applied. He chose to go to

Baylor College of Medicine in Houston so that he could be close to his family. He matriculated to BCM in 1950 during the Korean War. When he received his draft notification and prepared to report for duty, the BCM administration intervened allowing him to complete his medical training. This appropriate intervention by legitimate authority - where the vulnerable are protected - was one of many important life lessons he would later teach his family. After medical school and residency in Cleveland, OH, Dr. Shaw returned to Houston and opened a private family practice, which he operated for 50 years, while also serving on the medical staffs of Woman's Hospital of Texas, St. Joseph's Hospital, and St. Luke's. Throughout his long medical career he provided care to multiple generations of people from the same families. At the age of 40, he returned to school to earn his Master's degree in Public Health. Outside of medicine, Dr. Shaw was an avid entrepreneur. A creative businessman, he was active in commercial real estate development and many ventures. Among his various contributions, he consulted as chief medical director in the development and planning of The Woodlands. He was industrious with an immigrant's ambition for a better life for himself and his family. In 1969 Dr. Shaw married Adelle Abramson, a beautiful southern belle from Shreveport, LA. Adelle's background was quite different, but her diligent attention to detail and grounding practicality complemented Dr. Shaw's curious, open and visionary mind. Together they built a strong and successful family partnership and a marriage of 49 years. He was deeply committed to physical wellness and together with Adelle was a founding member of the Houstonian Health and Fitness Club, where they exercised twice daily for more than 40 years. In his later years Dr. Shaw experienced a series of difficult health challenges, managing each of these with courage, a strict diet and his relentless daily exercise routine. He fought back against each possible setback -- regaining his strength and mobility through an iron will. His perseverance through adversity helped him get back on his bicycle for hours every day, serving as a shining example of the power of the human spirit.

Dr. Shaw is preceded in death by his parents, his older brother Lionel, and his wife Adelle. He is survived by his devoted sons Dr. Erik Tabakin Shaw of the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Dr. Chad Abramson Shaw of Baylor College of Medicine and Rice University in Houston, and their wives Lali Hughes Shaw and Anat Kelman Shaw, as well as beloved grandchildren Livia Grace, Talia Sage, Wexner Tabakin, Noa Kelman and Ella Abramson Shaw who all lovingly called him their Papa Lee. Dr. Shaw is also survived by many loving cousins, dear friends, and supportive caregivers. Dr. Shaw modeled the importance of overcoming the challenges and sorrows that befall our lives, showing up, and moving ever forward. His courage and fearless resolve are an inspiration to his family and others who knew and admired him. May his memory be for a blessing. A memorial service was held Sunday, October 4th, 2020 at Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism (hcrj.org).