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A Legacy of Leadership: Dr. Francis E. Rosato Sr.

Francis E. Rosato Sr. MD, had a long and distinguished career in Jefferson’s Department of Surgery. Roseato was an innovator in the field, advancing the standards of care for many surgical specialties.

Dr. Rosato’s father was a general practitioner who ran his practice out of the family home. Despite the lack of formal education, Dr. Rosato excelled in his practice and was recognized by his peers. He was known for his dedication to his patients and his ability to make difficult decisions.

Dr. Rosato’s daughter, Anne, and his son, Francis E. Rosato Jr., MD, joined the faculty at Jefferson Medical College. His granddaughters, Diane and Mary, also joined the faculty.

The Surgeon Speaks

Dr. Francis E. Rosato Sr. was a leader in the field of surgery, and his contributions to medicine were significant.

Francis E. Rosato Sr. joined the Department of Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania in 1978 and was appointed Samuel D. Gross Professor and Chair of Surgery in 1978. He served as the Chair until 2000, during which time the department grew from a small, isolated department to a large, well-integrated department with several subspecialties.

Dr. Rosato was a leader in the development of new surgical techniques and the advancement of surgical education. He was instrumental in the development of laparoscopic surgery, which he performed with great success.

Dr. Rosato was a mentor to many young surgeons and was known for his dedication to his patients and his commitment to medical education. He was a role model for generations of surgeons and will be remembered for his contributions to medicine.

Col. Darnell Waun’s Second Chance at Life

Col. Darnell Waun has been a critical care nurse for all 24 years of his career in the Air Force Nursing Corps, but only after a 2005 liver transplant at Jefferson has he felt fully experienced, as he says, “both sides of the bed.”

In 1986, while serving as Commander of the 86th Medical Operation Squadron and Chief Nurse at Kunsan Air Force Base, Korea, Col. Waun was diagnosed with Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC). This disease causes the bile ducts to narrow through inflammation and scarring, progressing slowly, ending in a 7 to 10 year life expectancy. After undergoing a partial liver resection, Col. Waun enjoyed many years of relative good health, even flying with the Air Force’s Air Vac Unit until 2005.

In June 2006, Col. Waun was stationed at Dover Air Force Base (AFB) in Delaware—where he explains, “because there may be no end date. Your life revolves around staying close to the transplant center.” He grew sicker, ultimately having to stop leaving over the road as his abdomen would fill with fluid.

On October 29th, 2005, the Colonel learned he was the back-up recipient for a liver. “It was a huge rush,” he says, “but I also was aware that this could be my last chance.”

On Halloween Day, a matching liver became available, and Col. Darnell Waun, MD, performed the surgery. Col. Waun was discharged within 16 days and back at work on January 3, 2006, as the Commander of the 86th Medical Group at Dover AFB. He has since communicated with the donor’s family, who has experienced both sides of transplant surgery. The donor’s brother had received a heart transplant.

Col. Waun retired this summer from the Air Force, but is considering becoming a transplant coordinator. “I’d like to be able to make a similar kind of difference in the lives of others,” he says. “Although I firmly believe that there is also something bigger that plays a hand.”

Liver transplant patient Col. Darnell Waun is entering retirement in excellent health and considering a second career as a transplant coordinator.