

Holdship, Dr. E.C.

Dr. E.C. Holdship, known simply as "Doc," died at the age of 81 on Sunday afternoon, March 3, 2002. He is lovingly called "the last of the small-time country doctors." For 47 years he worked 18 or more hours a day giving all the service he could provide to the patients he loved. Patients and friends always expected a kiss from the "kissing doctor." He was born Jan. 4, 1921, to the late Dr. W.B. and Georgia (Faye) Holdship in Ugly. He and Dian Morell were united in marriage at St. Rita's Catholic Church in Connellsville, Pa., on July 26, 1954. Doc was a graduate of Ugly High School, attended Emory University in Atlanta, Ga., and graduated from Michigan State University. He received his medical degree from Kirksville School of Osteopathic Medicine. He also served in the medical corps of the U.S. Army during World War II. In 1951, he opened practice in his father's office in Ugly where he remained active for 47 years. He also served as Huron County Medical Examiner, medical consultant to the Huron County Health Department, physician for the Huron County Sheltered Workshop, Huron County jail and several other major businesses, industries and schools in the county. Doc was on staff at Huron Memorial Hospital in Bad Axe and Hills and Dales Hospital in Cass City. He was an associate professor at MSU. He received numerous awards throughout his career for his dedication, service and love of humanity. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the Fraternal Order of Police for his lifesaving act when a 21-year old man became entangled in a corn auger. In 1972, along with Dr. Kenneth Herrington and Dr. Kenneth Kube, he saved the life of a 41-year old man by installing the first pacemaker in Huron Memorial Hospital. He was named outstanding physician for the State of Michigan in 1981. He was seriously ill and hospitalized after major surgery when a blizzard left the county snowbound and shut off traffic to Huron Memorial Hospital. Doc wheeled himself, his tubes and intravenous bottles to OB where he delivered even more babies. Doc was active in many organizations including the Ugly Lions Club, Community Club, TVO and Ugly's Alabama Jubilee. When Ugly High School needed uniforms, he purchased them and the following year paid to outfit the majorettes. He is survived by his wife, Dian; two sons, William G. Holdship of Pasadena, Calif., and Barry Holdship and his fiancée, Deborah Russell, of Sherman Oaks, Calif.; one daughter, Gigi VanErp and her husband, Dr. Jeffrey VanErp of Grand Rapids; two grandsons, J. Nicholas and Alexander VanErp; one granddaughter, Mia VanErp; two sisters-in-law, Shari Thompson and husband, Steve, of Grand Rapids, and Gerry Holdship of Ugly; two nephews, Richard Holdship and his wife, Rickie, of Ugly and Michael Holdship and his wife, Carolyn, of Cadillac; two nieces, Jean Beltz of Mount Clemens and Pat Oistad of Midland; and two very close family friends, Jim Braun of Bad Axe and Brian Boyce of Bad Axe. Doc was preceded in death by his parents; two brothers, Merrill and Keith; and one sister, Constance Bukoski. Doc will be remembered as the "doctor giving kisses." He has touched the lives of thousands through his genuine commitment and deep-rooted love of his patients. During his years in medicine, he assisted the delivery of enough babies to populate Bad Axe. Many were home deliveries for people who were unable to afford hospital care. Until the day he died, every conversation ended with "let me know if there is anything I can do for you." Mass of Christian burial will take place at 10:30 a.m. Friday, March 8, 2002, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Bad Axe. Fr. John Killop will officiate. Burial will be in St. John's Cemetery in Ugly. There will be a scripture service at 7 p.m. and a rosary at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at MacAlpine Funeral Home in Bad Axe. Visitation will be 6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday and 1 to 9 p.m. Thursday at the funeral home. Memorials may be offered to the Love-light tree at Huron Medical Center or the Sacred Heart Catholic Church Choir.