

## In Memoriam

### AAP past president Dr. Burton made strides in community, nationwide



Dr. Burton

Remembered as an astute community pediatrician whose biggest goal was the health of all children in a medical home, **O. Marion Burton, M.D., FAAP**, of Columbia, S.C., died July 7. He was 70.

“Few pediatricians have had the influence and impact on community, state and national pediatrics as Dr. Burton,” said Errol R. Alden, M.D., FAAP, former AAP executive director/CEO. “His work

in establishing the medical home and quality improvement programs have made South Carolina a leader among states and in the nation.”

Elected to serve as AAP president in 2010-'11, his aims were clear: quality care with a Bright Futures focus for every child, adequately financed and in a medical home. Further, he wished to concentrate on social determinants of health and promote pediatricians' role in society.

He once stated: “I know from my patients' experiences that caring for children in medical homes, linked to community resources, lessens poverty's negative influence on growth, development, health and community well-being.”

Dr. Burton earned his medical degree from Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and completed a residency in pediatrics at Greenville Hospital System, MUSC, and Medical University of Georgia.

Early in his career, he practiced in Anderson, S.C., and taught at a local primary care residency program. There, he witnessed countless frustrated new pediatricians who returned to the city, driven away from rural practice because of barriers to care for impoverished families. Dr. Burton then became determined to make the medical home concept a reality for all of pediatricians.

In 1991, he joined the University of South Carolina's School of Medicine. He established and directed the Division of Community

Pediatrics, was associate dean for clinical affairs and conducted locum tenens programs for rural pediatricians. He also was clinical associate professor.

In South Carolina, he helped establish 75 partnerships between public health professionals and practicing pediatricians to create medical homes for children. He also served as senior medical consultant to the state's public health and Medicaid agencies.

In the early 1990s, he became involved with the Healthy Tomorrows Partnership for Children, which evolved into the Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) program. He served as the chapter CATCH facilitator, district CATCH facilitator (DCF) and national DCF chair.

Dr. Burton served a tour of duty as a flight surgeon in the Army National Guard, served three decades in the guard and was promoted in 1989 to state surgeon. The National Guard honored him as National Flight Surgeon of the Year.

He also served as president of the South Carolina Pediatric Society and South Carolina Medical Association, and was chair of the AAP delegation to the American Medical Association (AMA) and AAP Council on Committees and Council on Committees Management Committee. In 2002, Dr. Burton was honored with the AAP-AMA Abraham Jacobi Memorial Award for lifelong contributions to national pediatrics.

With a reputation for his tendency to get lost, he never strayed from a keen sense of humor and was known to bring laughter with practical jokes. In their free time, Dr. Burton and his wife, Debbie, enjoyed playing tennis and jogging together.

He is survived by Debbie, six children and eight grandchildren.

— *Trisha Koriath*