

ABERNATHY, Margaret R., M.D

Margaret Roberts Abernathy, born March 23, 1926, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on March 16, 2009. She was born in Washington, D.C., to Floyd Roberts and Catherine Dooley Roberts. She and Brad Abernathy were married on October 30, 1947, and had a long and happy marriage, a true partnership of two people who were made for each other, which did not end until Brad's death in June of 2002.

Dr. Abernathy attended undergraduate and graduate school at Catholic University of America, Northwestern University, and the American University. She taught briefly in the Washington Public School System and at Catholic University. She began medical school at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond (one of only two women in her class), on the same day her youngest daughter started first grade. She graduated with an M.D. degree in June of 1964, thus fulfilling her lifelong dream of becoming a doctor. She completed internships at the Washington Hospital Center and the Washington Veterans Administration Hospital, and then joined the Department of Neurology of Georgetown University, where she remained for over 30 years. She was the first director of the Breast Cancer Screening Center at Georgetown University Medical Center, and was a pioneer in the field of infrared thermography, particularly in its applications for cerebrovascular disease and breast cancer. She was a founding member of the American Academy of Thermology. She lectured worldwide in the field of medicine, and was dearly loved by the medical students at Georgetown. She and her husband established the Abernathy Plan, by which Georgetown's empty-nest faculty members provided room & board to medical students, and in fact had students living with them in Vienna, Virginia, for several years. Dr. Abernathy retired from Georgetown in the mid-1990s and maintained a private practice in Vienna until 2000, when she and her husband moved to Swarthmore, PA. She was always happiest when she was with her family, but the hospital and her patients ran a close second.

She was preceded in death by her parents, by her brother, Thomas Roberts, and her sister, Ann Roberts Nance, and by her husband, Thomas Bradford Abernathy. She is sur-

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vived by her daughters, Mary Seal, and husband, Vee, of Albuquerque, New Mexico; Anne O'Rourke, Swarthmore, and Catherine Abernathy, Swarthmore; and by three grandchildren, Mary Catherine O'Rourke, Teigh O'Rourke, and Christen Bradford Seal.

Her family will miss her, but we are grateful for the life of this remarkable woman who profoundly impacted her family, her friends, and every patient who passed under her hands over the years. Dr. Abernathy was a guiding hand to the science and practice of medical thermology and a mentor to many of us in the field including Dr. Govindan and me.