



Dr. Daniel J Cole

April 09, 1946 - October 13, 2024

Dr. Daniel J. Cole, age 78, a beloved figure of the Fort Dodge community, passed away on the evening of October 13, 2024, after a life richly lived in service and kindness. He was surrounded by his loving wife, family, and dear friends.

He is survived by his beautiful, loving wife Sheila Cole, his children Sarah (Matt) Cosgrove, Chris (Stacey) Cole, John (Carly) Cole, Joe (Katja) Cole, Katie (Will) Kenny, step-children Heather (Kelly) Lowe, Jordan Benton, Courtney (Nick) Newkirk, 17 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren, and his brother Kelly Samson. He was preceded in death by his parents Joe and Viola Cole, his birth mother, Bethalyn "Beth" Whitefoot, sister Jackie Stauffer, and great-grandchild Jay Lowe.

Dan was born April 9, 1946, in Kearney, Nebraska. He was adopted and raised by his loving parents Joe and Viola Cole. In 1952, when he was six years old, his family moved to Fort Dodge, Iowa. During his early life, Dan enjoyed hunting with his father, going to the theaters his father managed, scouting, and working at scout camp every summer. He attended Holy Rosary grade school and graduated from Saint Edmond Catholic School in 1964. After high school he attended Creighton University of Medicine and graduated in 1971. He enjoyed science and dealing with people and felt medicine was a good combination of the two.

As a servant leader, Dan embarked on his journey in the early 1970's with the Iowa Air National Guard under the United States Air Force in the 133rd tactical control squadron as a doctor. He was honorably discharged from the Air National Guard on October 19, 1982, and the United States Air Force on July 15, 1996, as a testimonial of honest and faithful service. He valued his service highly and attained the rank of Major. In addition, he began his medical career in 1972, working alongside his mentor Dr. John Kelly, Dr. John Birkett, and eventually Dr. Alan Nguyen. From there, his medical career spanned nearly 50 years where he wore many hats, eventually retiring from medicine in 2021, being recognized as a Hospital Hero. Throughout his nearly 50-year lifework, he was a tireless learner, leader, teacher, mentor, and friend. He was well known for his easy going personality and common-sense approach to any given situation. His service to others was a continuous swinging door. He listened to countless patient concerns, delivered hundreds of babies, and dedicated countless hours volunteering his time to helping others. In many cases throughout his career, cases throughout his career, he cared for entire families.

During the span of his medical career he worked and served as a family practice physician, Emergency Department Medical Director, a fellow member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, a fellow member of the American Academy of Emergency Physicians, taught countless EMS classes, lobbied for LifeFlight, helped develop the Hospice program, Hospice Medical Director, Medical Director of Unity-Point Clinic Family Medicine — Second Avenue North, a founding member and later president of the Iowa Association of County Medical Examiners. He made significant contributions and carried out each of these roles for decades. He carried out a key role as the Webster County Medical Examiner for over 50 years up until the time of his death.

Apart from his significant contributions to UnityPoint Health and the community, he was a devoted and active member of the Catholic Church. Dan loved his wife, children, family, and friends dearly. In December of 2003, Dan was united in marriage to his loving wife of 20 years, Sheila. Prior to his marriage to Sheila, he was blessed with five beautiful children. The couple blended their families. During his later life, he enjoyed spending time with his wife and family, mentoring others, performing magic, scuba diving, swimming in the pool, and as the family jokes, watching Fox News. Dan was a man of immense wisdom, humor, generosity, and kindness. He cherished every moment spent with his loved ones, working hard, and helping others. He will forever be remembered for his dedication, compassion, and service for all those he touched within Fort Dodge, the surrounding communities, and beyond.

In remembrance, a visitation will be held at Holy Trinity Catholic Parish, where we will honor Dr. Daniel Cole's enduring impact on our community and hearts. The visitation will take place on Thursday, October 17, 2024, from 4:00-7:00 PM beginning with a rosary service at 3:45 PM and ending with a vigil service at 7:00 PM. The Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Friday, October 18, 2024, at 11:00 AM at Holy Trinity Catholic Parish. Gunderson Funeral Home and Cremation Services is entrusted with the arrangements.

In remembrance of Dan's life of service and kindness, the family asks for contributions to be made to the UnityPoint Paula J. Baber Hospice Home, a community-based organization dear to his heart, and/or to spread random acts of kindness in place of condolences in the form of flowers.



Her favorite student ...