

Editorial

Funeral for a friend

I am so glad I called.

The world knew him as Gordon Dwight Mattison—dentist, endodontist, educator, and editor. Some knew him as Gordon—his family and close friends called him Dwight.

I went to visit Dwight on April 15; as it turned out, it was for the last time. I wanted to go before a long trip to the Far East because it appeared that the cancer that was ravaging his body was reaching a critical stage. He was thin and very weak, yet he still managed to avoid any talk of his illness.

I was in Bangkok on May 6 when I called. We spoke of him feeling a little better since my visit. Perhaps this was just Dwight's way of gently broaching the subject—he was never one for self-pity. We spoke of his adorable young son Tyler, of whom I said he should be very proud—"Yes," he said with a twinge of obvious, yet painfully unfulfillable, pride, "I am." As fate would have it, this was my last conversation with my friend.

Despite the devastating effects of his illness, Gordon Dwight Mattison continued to provide outstanding reviews of the manuscripts submitted to *Quintessence International* that were entrusted to his judgment. He was thorough, much more so than most reviewers, because he felt that it was his obligation to help authors improve their work rather than be critical. This was one of Dwight's trademarks, as noted by several speakers at his funeral. He was a major influence on the lives of students and those around him. Among his many university and community activities, Dwight chaired the Affirmative Action Committee at the University of Florida in Gainesville. He worked selflessly to help others and was an eloquent spokesman for humankind, not just for people of color.

I never heard Dwight mention an angry word about anyone. He never complained about his misfortune in drawing the card that meant early death after a long and painful illness. He never complained about all the

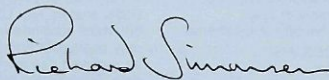
professional and personal goals that would be left undone. Actually he had accomplished more than many would be proud to call a life's work, yet he could have done so much more for the profession, for education, and for his fellow citizens of this world.

At our last parting on April 15, we hugged. He winced as I thoughtlessly patted his painfully swollen abdomen. He looked at me saying solemnly, "Now you drive more slowly." (I had a long drive ahead of me from Gainesville to the Orlando airport and he knew that I tend to drive a little fast at times.) Not satisfied with my casual response, he repeated the admonition with a long and penetrating look into my eyes as we parted. This was Dwight as his finest—always thinking of others and leaving me with a last message to take care of *myself* as he lay dying. I will never forget that last meeting, that last message, and that last look. Thank you, Dwight.

Dwight is survived by his lovely mother, Charlotte Simmons of Frankfort, Kentucky; his beautiful wife, Sharene Taylor Mattison; his two sons, Gordon Dwight Mattison Jr and Tyler Dwight Mattison; as well as other family members. Condolences from all connected with *Quintessence International* go to his family and his large circle of friends, all of whom will miss him dearly, as will we.

On May 7, the day after my last call from half of world away and just one week before his young son's first birthday, Gordon Dwight Mattison died at age 43. Rest in peace dear brother.

I am so glad I called.



Richard J. Simonsen
Editor-in-Chief