

Kevin B. Dole, MD | 1948-2017

June 2017—Kevin B. Dole, MD, 68, a member of the CAP Board of Governors from 2001 to 2007, died April 23 of metastatic pancreatic cancer.



Dr. Dole

He had served as a member of the Councils on Government and Professional Affairs and on Public Affairs and as chair of the Council on Membership and Professional Development. He was a member of more than a dozen committees, among them Credentials, CLIA Implementation, Practice Guidelines, and Federal and State Affairs (which he chaired). He was named Pathologist of the Year in 2009.

Colleagues spoke of Dr. Dole's intellect and his infectious sense of humor. The magnetic combination drew people to him and led to enduring friendships.

"He was encyclopedic in his knowledge about any subject," says Thomas M. Wheeler, MD, who served with Dr. Dole on the Council on Government and Professional Affairs. "He was a Renaissance guy. He knew Latin and Greek. If you told him some story or historical fact, he would add to it, whatever it was. He wasn't condescending, just sharing his knowledge with a smile."

"I like to kiddingly refer to him as the Don Rickles of pathology," says Gene Herbek, MD, 2013-15 CAP president. "He really had a way of livening up the party and the conversation." Dr. Dole was known for ribbing his colleagues but "it was just his way of letting you know he liked you and knew a little bit about you."

"He brought a spirit to any meeting," recalls Paul Raslavicus, MD, CAP president from 2001 to 2003.

Dr. Dole indulged his love of history and geography during the many international inspections he conducted for the CAP after he retired, usually taking a few extra days to tour and explore places of historical significance.

"I went on a few inspection trips with him, and he took those inspections seriously," Robert L. Breckenridge, MD, MBA, says. "He would get angry if somebody wasn't doing the right job and he'd just lay it out there for them. He didn't care if they were clients. He wanted them to make sure that any lab headed by a CAP-certified pathologist was doing a good job by its patients."

Dr. Breckenridge, who nominated Dr. Dole for the 2009 Pathologist of the Year award, says his intense focus on member growth while serving as chair of the Council on Membership and Professional Development benefits the CAP to this day.

"He was largely responsible for increasing the membership, finding ways to reach out to those who didn't know about the College," Dr. Breckenridge says. "He'd personally pick up the phone and talk to members about any problem they might have, with the College or the profession. He didn't leave it up to staff to make those calls."

Dr. Dole also pioneered member segmentation at the CAP, says Dr. Breckenridge, developing strategies and programs for pathologists new to practice, in practice for a few years, as well as senior pathologists. "He always was asking how he could make every member feel like they were part of the community."

“He put members first,” Dr. Herbek says. “He was a community pathologist and understood the nuances and challenges of the majority of the pathologists who practice in the United States.”

For one colleague, a friendship with Dr. Dole bloomed into love and a life commitment. Elizabeth Dole, MD, met Kevin nine years ago when both were serving on the Autopsy Committee.

In April, a few days after Kevin received his diagnosis, the couple exchanged vows at a party in their Dallas home, officiated by Dr. Breckenridge. Dr. Wheeler called the ceremony “vintage Kevin,” adding that it spoke highly of his character and his outlook.

Dr. Elizabeth Dole says her husband was most proud of his part in leading the CAP to end its practice of allowing free access to its accreditation checklists. “He recognized early on that we shouldn’t let everybody freely access those CAP checklists because our competitors were using them,” she says. “I think it’s phenomenal that he was able to do that.”

“I’m just lucky that I had nine years with him,” Dr. Elizabeth Dole says. “Although he will be terribly missed, and it cut his life awfully short, the things he has done to improve pathology will live on.”

In addition to his wife, Dr. Dole is survived by three children from a previous marriage and three grandchildren.