

A COWBOY DOCTOR

At the center of the annual staff meeting at Mayo Clinic's campus in Jacksonville last November was Eugene Page, M.D., a consultant in the Division of Cardiovascular Diseases and president of the Jacksonville staff. As the first president of the staff, an elected position created in 2005, Dr. Page ran the meeting with the same gusto that has made him a beloved colleague, physician and member of the Jacksonville community.

Strangers witnessing the meeting would never have guessed that just months prior, Dr. Page was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, an aggressive disease that often has a poor prognosis. Nor would they have suspected that he had recently begun debilitating treatments for the disease, including surgery and chemotherapy.

A native of Tallahassee, Fla., Dr. Page attended college on an athletic scholarship to the University of Florida, where he lettered in football and track. Dr. Page's passion for athletics was matched by his interest in becoming a physician, a career choice that he made early in life, he says.

At the University of Florida, he excelled in academics. He earned the University's nomination for a Rhodes Scholarship and attended Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where he also completed his residency and cardiology fellowship. "My grandfather was a surgeon, and growing up, we had a wonderful family physician who always seemed to bring relief to my mother whenever she saw him," says Dr. Page, whose footwear of choice at work is cowboy boots. "So, I grew up wanting to be able to provide similar relief to other people. A cowboy doctor is what I always said I wanted to be."

"Dr. Page demands excellence and is constantly advocating for his patients. He is passionate about everything," says Mara Crismond, an echocardiography tech. "He is so dedicated to us; he is constantly teaching and making sure we learn from everything that happens."

JOINING MAYO AND GIVING BACK

One of the great testaments to Dr. Page's character came when Mayo Clinic announced plans, in the mid-1980s, to open the Jacksonville campus. At that time, he was a fixture in the community, the head of cardiology at St. Luke's Hospital and a partner in an established cardiology group in Jacksonville. Still, Dr. Page wholeheartedly supported the Clinic's plans, because he believed Mayo's presence would benefit the community and his patients.

In 1996, the founder of Dr. Page's private practice announced plans to retire, giving him the opportunity to join Mayo Clinic. Many of his patients from private practice came with him, but the Mayo experience was profoundly different, he says. At Mayo, he could con-

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centrate solely on practicing medicine and had none of the administrative responsibilities that go along with running a private practice.

The desire to help the next generation of Mayo physicians inspired Dr. Page to become a member of The Doctors Mayo Society and to make a gift to support the construction of Mayo Clinic Hospital.

"Somebody ahead of you has paved the way for what you're doing now, so we've always said in my family: 'pass it on,'" Dr. Page says. "So, we thought we would contribute in this way; that we would provide others with the opportunity to travel similar roads that we've walked."

"We" and "ours" are important words for Dr. Page, who uses them often and with a mixture of admiration and love. Almost always, they refer to his family, which includes Pat, his wife of more than 40 years, his two sons and four grandchildren.

Mrs. Page has always been a foundation of support. Dr. Page says, "Pat has been there through it all: medical school, the years in private practice, and, when the boys were growing up, my coaching in Little League and junior football," says Dr. Page, who has a Little League field in Jacksonville named in his honor. "She's a wonderful giver and we're best friends."

Eugene Page, M.D.



MIRROR

Each day I wake up, to be as good as I can be,
So when I look in the mirror, I like what I see.
The choices of the day are many; temptations will surely grow,
And the judge that's in the mirror is the toughest one I know.
On looking back on roads I've walked and places that I've been,
I hope that those with whom I've walked will want me back again.
So when the day is over and all the races run,
I want to look in the mirror ... and know that I have won.

— a poem by Dr. Eugene Page