



Obituary

Died: Saturday, May 16, 2020

George H. Rawls was born in 1928 in Gainesville, Florida to Nicholas O. Rawls, Sr. and Lona Babbs Rawls and died peacefully on May 16, 2020. He graduated as the valedictorian from Florida A&M University where he met the love of his life, Lula, whom he married in 1951. Their deep love for each other was evident to anyone who met them throughout their 68 years of marriage, and his love for the family they created was of utmost importance in his life.

He earned his M.D. from Howard University Medical School in 1952 where he graduated Alpha Omega Alpha and dedicated himself to giving back to his schools and the community. His surgical internship was at Philadelphia General Hospital. He then served in the U.S. Army for two years before completing his residency in surgery at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Dayton, Ohio.

The family, which now included three young daughters, moved to Indianapolis in 1959, and he became one of the first Black surgeons in the area during the era of racial segregation. He became a distinguished, well-known, and compassionate surgeon with a thriving practice for 34 years. He broke numerous barriers over the course of his career with a commitment to excellence in all that he did.

He had a passion for healthcare in his community, which has been threaded through his career as a surgeon, as a Clinical Professor of Surgery teaching residents at Indiana University and as an advocate. He served on the Indiana University Medical School Admissions Committee. He was a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, and served as the president of the following organizations: the Marion County Medical Society, the Indiana State Medical Society, and the Aesculapian Medical Society. He was also a long-term member and past president of the Indiana State Medical Licensing Board.

Dr. Rawls was a major icon in the community. After retiring from his surgical practice in 1993, he spent five years as an Assistant Dean of Medical Student Affairs while continuing to teach as a Clinical Professor of Surgery at Indiana University where he retired with emeritus status. He always stressed the values of hard work and discipline. This was evidenced in his accomplishments. While he was the Assistant Dean at the medical school he established a Masters of Science in Medical Science program in which over 300 students were successful in matriculating into medical school. His legacies include the creation of the Lula and George Rawls Award of Excellence scholarship at The IU School of Medicine, the Eli Lilly Minority Scholarship (1999-2014)

Service Summary

Private Services

Interment

Fri May 29, 2020

CROWN HILL CEMETERY

700 WEST 38TH STREET
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46208

that brought two highly qualified minority students per year to the medical school, and the development of the Pre-matriculation Program (1995-2004) at the medical school. In addition, he helped establish the George Rawls Scholarship within the Wishard Memorial Foundation and the Health and Hospital Corporation.

He had numerous accolades, including, the Jefferson Award in 1991, the J.O. Ritchie Award in 2002, and two Sagamore of the Wabash Awards (from Governor Orr and Governor Bayh). He received honorary doctorates from Florida A&M University and Indiana University School of Medicine. Aside from his accomplishments, Dr. Rawls was influential in other important ways. The Center for Leadership Development (CLD) honored him, naming their high school student pre-medical program the Rawls Scholars Medicine Initiative. Together, he and his wife, Lula, have been committed to expanding opportunities for young scholars. In addition to establishing scholarships at IU School of Medicine, they created scholarships for students at Florida A&M University and Howard University School of Medicine.

Dr. Rawls was guided by his Christian beliefs and faith, and it showed in the way he shared his gifts with students, colleagues and friends. He was an active member since 1960 and an elder of Witherspoon Presbyterian Church. He was actively engaged in civic and community organizations, serving on the boards of The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, The Urban League, Flanner House, Goodwill Industries, and the Indianapolis Zoo. He served as chairman/co-chairman of the life membership committee for the NAACP for 30 years. He was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., 100 Black Men of Indianapolis, and Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. He also enjoyed traveling, was an avid golfer, and a Diamond Life Master bridge player.

Dr. Rawls was a prolific author, writing memoirs, historical, and personal development books including, *So You Want To Be a Doctor; Papa, I Want To Be a Surgeon; The History of the Black Physician in Indianapolis, 1870-2000; The Surgeon's Turn*, and *Managing Cancer: The African-American's Guide to Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment*.

Dr. Rawls' greatest joy was his wife Lula, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents and his brothers, Nicholas and John Rawls. He is lovingly remembered by his wife Lula; his daughters— Yvonne Rawls, Bettye-Jo Lloyd (Frank Lloyd, Jr.), and Sheree Williams (Sherman); his grandchildren— Frank Lloyd III, Jessica Williams, Courtney Lloyd, and Joshua Williams (Tina); his great-grandchildren— Zoe and Joy Williams, and his former medical student/mentee, Dr. Hilton Hudson. He is also survived by a host of beloved nieces, nephews, relatives, students,

residents, and dear friends.

Dr. Rawls was wonderfully cared for and supported by his many excellent physicians and nurses. His healing was enhanced by all of his loving and attentive caregivers, most recently at Marquette Assisted Living and St. Vincent's Hospice.

There will be a private burial service with plans for a future celebration of life. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the George Rawls Memorial Fund at Witherspoon Presbyterian Church, 5136 Michigan Rd, Indianapolis, IN, 46228.