

Prudencio B. Camara, M.D.

Autobiography

This is Doctor P.B. Camara from the Philippines. I entered the United States through Anchorage, Alaska in 1955. I stayed a few days in San Francisco with some friends and then continued the trip to Miami Beach, Florida.

I entered in Mount Sinai Hospital for one year and finished my residency in general surgery there in two years.

I met and married on 4-26-1958, Billie Jean Hoskins, while in Miami Beach. We were married in Saint Patrick's Catholic Church. We lived for two years there and bought a house in Westwood Heights Lake, a suburb of Miami, in 1960.

I proceeded with my training and finished three more years of surgical training in Saint Thomas Hospital which is affiliated with Vanderbilt. I finished one full year there as chief resident.

In 1963, after my training, I worked for one year with Doctor Sidney Waynewright Ballard in downtown Nashville, Tennessee.

In 1964, I had three places to pick from at the time that I chose to come to Hinton. One was Charlotte, North Carolina; another was Shreveport, Louisiana, or Hinton, West Virginia.

I met a friend in Richmond, Virginia who told me he was going to Point Pleasant, West Virginia and that Hinton was on his way. He said I could ride with him and we could chat about how the ten years had passed since we graduated. I was fortunate that I came with him.

I applied for a position with the Hinton Hospital, was offered a job and accepted. After we had been here for one year, I told my wife that we might have to go back to Tennessee to practice general surgery and she said that I could return there and send support for her and the children so they could stay in this town. I decided to stay here with my family. I have been a resident here for the past fourteen years. The place is beautiful as well as the people. They are very friendly and have a good Christian attitude.

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I worked in the Hinton Hospital for two years and after I received my citizenship and passed my state boards, I opened my own private practice where I practiced for one year before the Summers County Hospital was opened. I started my surgical practice and since then I have worked very hard. I cannot express my thanks enough to the town and the people for accepting me and giving me a good living.

I have three children. My wife delivered the first child, Theresa, on December 23, 1958, in Miami, Florida. My second child, Mecot, was born December 28, 1960 in Nashville, Tennessee. My third child, Elisa, the last, was born October 6, 1965 in Bluefield, West Virginia. The children are all grown now. Theresa attends Hinton High School and is graduating this year, 1977. Mecot is in the tenth grade and Elisa is in the sixth grade and will be in the high school building next year.

My wife and two children were still in Nashville, when one afternoon, in Hinton, I was walking, looking for a house and I happened to pass by a gentleman, who was very friendly, and his name was Harry Richmond. We started talking about apartments and possible houses for rent. During our course of conversation, he invited me to have dinner with him and I ended up in his dining room with Harry and his very gracious and lovely wife, Irene. I had my first dinner in the town in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Richmond and it was a very delightful evening. We had chicken, peas, rolls, and I was offered my first drink of buttermilk, but I could only drink half of this. I did not like it, but I drank it to please my host.

Our first house which was owned by Mrs. Nellie Webb had a big apple tree in front which was filled with delicious fruit. My eldest child always asked me if I could plant an apple tree for her because she had never seen one. I rented this house because of the apple tree; even I had not seen the inside of it. When we moved in the house, Theresa spent the whole day under the apple tree. She was a most happy child.

When I opened my office, I was rather daring because there had been some insinuations that I would not be successful. There had been other foreign doctors ahead of me who tried to open an office and left the town because of lack of patients. However, my practice turned out very nicely and when the Summers County Hospital opened, I started my surgical practice.

We then bought the house of Mr. and Mrs. Garnet Willey on Greenbrier Drive. The address is 1004 rear. When we bought the house, the yard was quite big and looking around, I told myself there were many possibilities and a few years later

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we developed the yard. We landscaped and built a pond with an arch bridge characteristic of an oriental bridge. There is a waterfall coming from a grotto where the Lady of Lourdes stands. The waterfall is about fifteen feet high and falls into two basins, then goes into the big pond where there are goldfish, carp from Japan, and water lilies.

When we opened the office, we did not have any money and my wife worked hard day and night to clean the office and arrange things.

The priest who was in town was Father Hickey. He was very kind. He had communication with a Sister who owns Saint Mary's Hospital in Huntington and one morning we drove there with a big truck, driven by Mr. Lindsay, and the nuns showed me the basement, and then gave me almost all the furnishings for my office. On top of this, they gave me an operating room table which was old but functional and an emergency table and fifteen mattresses.

The practice has grown tremendously and is more than I could have ever dreamed. My two sisters came to the United States to visit me and stayed with us and Empertris took examinations and passed and was able to enter a school of nursing. She then entered a school of anesthesiology in Charleston and finished as a nurse anesthesiologist and took the national board and passed. She is at present, working in the University Hospital in South Carolina. She married while here in Hinton. Her husband is a fine young fellow by the name of Neil Frost.

My younger sister, Gemma, came also to help very much in the office. There was a lack of registered nurses to work in Hinton doctor's offices. She is a registered nurse, graduating in the Philippines. She met and married a fine fellow named Richard Leftwich. And she is still working with me. Richard at the time of their marriage was working in the vocational school, where at a later date he had some problems with the school because of some politics and quit his job. We bought the Hinton Hardware Store once owned by the Deeds family and the store is now doing very well. They have a fine young son by the name of Alfonso.

We were able to buy some rental property so that the people of Hinton who needed a place to live could find something. This was my way of helping those who had helped me so much.

Last year, 1976, I had surgery. A radical operation for a malignant growth of the right testicle, and I had to have twenty-eight cobalt treatments which were rather

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strong. They left me very weak. With God's grace and blessing and the prayers of my friends and the town, I am now very healthy and doing my work as usual and working harder every day.

Jeannie has been very good with me and the kids and has been so helpful in times of need. She helped me so much during the time when I had my surgery and was so very ill. She drove me every day to Charleston Memorial Hospital for the cobalt treatments. I cannot express my thanks to her for the loyalty and her kindness and tender help.

I am looking forward to more good years with God's blessing and to the future of my children. I'm hoping that they will be happy and live good Christian lives and be good helpful citizens to the community and good citizens to the army of Jesus Christ our Lord.

-Humbleness is the foundation of all virtues

-The love of money is the root of all evil

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Dr. Camara continued providing exceptional care to old and new patients, all of whom became friends. He passed following a short illness on May 7, 1982.

The following is his obituary from the Hinton News of May 12, 1982

Prominent Physician Dies

Dr. Prudencio Beduya Camara, 59, died Friday May 7 in a Summers County hospital of natural causes.

Born July 28, 1922, in Cebu City, Philippines, he was a son of Galicana Beduya of Cebu City, Philippines, and the late Alfonso V. Camara.

Dr. Camara was a member of the St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Hinton, a member of the American Medical Association and a member of the Abdominal Surgeons Society. He was the first Chief of Staff of Summers County Hospital, former Chief of Surgery at the Summers County Hospital and a member of the Summers County Board of Education. Dr. Camara received the Elks Man of the Year award in 1982.

Other survivors include his wife, Jean Hoskins Camara; a son, Lance Cpl. Mecot Camara of the U.S. Marine Corps.; two daughters, Threase Lilly of Hinton and Elisa Camara, at home; six sisters, Amparo Si-

sson, Jesusa Magsayo, Luz Conseulo Camara and Jorgia Semense, all of Cebu City, Philippines, Gemma Leftwich of Hinton, and Emperatriz Frost of Roanoke, Va.; seven brothers, Vicente Camara, Alfonso Camara, Jose Camara, Francisco Camara, Ramon Camara, Valentino Camara, and Isidro Camara and two grandchildren.

Services were Wednesday May 12 at 2 p.m. at the St. Patrick's Catholic Church with Father Paul Tedesco officiating. Burial followed in the Restwood Memorial Gardens in Hinton.

A prayer service was held Tuesday May 11 at 8:30 p.m.

Pallbearers were Kyle Gwinn, Jim Tassos, Jimmy Coste Sr., Jack Lilly, W.C. (Bill) Lilly, Dave Ziegler, Johnny Angotti, David Fleshman, Dr. C.O. O' Farrell and Roy Carter.

The medical staff of the Summers County Hospital served as honorary pallbearers.

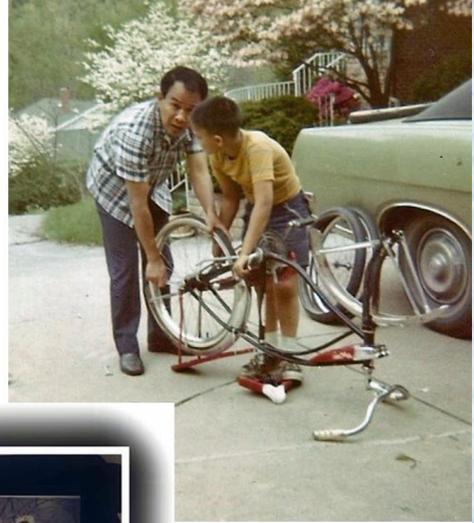


Dr. Prudencio B. Camara We Salute You!

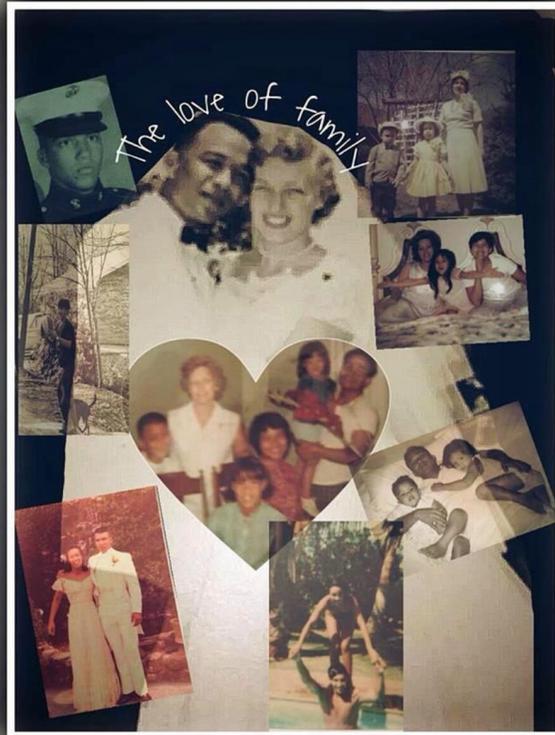
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