



**Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Patriot of the Month
November 2013**



William C. Sunderwirth

Sponsored by

Rachel Donelson Chapter

William "Dr. Bill" C. Sunderwirth was born at Burlinton, Kansas. He graduated from high school at El Dorado Springs, Missouri, in 1944, and immediately joined the Navy. He was assigned to a hospital in Long Beach, CA, and never served on a ship. His rank was Corpsman 2nd Class.

When discharged from the Navy, William enrolled at Baker University at Ballwin City, Kansas, and graduated in three years with majors in Chemistry and Biology. He applied to medical school at Kansas State at Lawrence, but was turned down because all the out-of-state slots were filled. He then applied to University of Missouri, but was turned down because his father was a Doctor of Osteopathy, and William had indicated he wanted to practice with his father. He then applied to Kansas City College of Osteopathy and Surgery, which is now known as University of Health Sciences, and was accepted.

William graduated in 1953, and was accepted for an internship at Wetzel Osteopathic Hospital at Clinton, Missouri. After working there for eight weeks he was told that his internship would not be approved. But Dr. Wetzel offered him \$800 per month if he would stay on. He stayed for five years, training in abdominal and orthopedic surgery, and Obstetrics and Gynecology. He passed the certification for those areas but was refused because one of the doctors he trained under was not certified.

William, instead, became certified in Family Practice. He practiced at Eldorado Springs, Missouri, for 20 years with his father. He delivered babies, performed surgeries, set broken limbs, and made house calls. He served a poor community and was often paid with other things besides money. One time, he was paid with twenty-five gallons of molasses by a family who raised sugar cane. He and his wife, Karen, were given goats and other animals in payment for his services. The town of Stockton was without a doctor, and he and three other doctors gave up their day off to treat patients in Stockton for over a year until the town was able to procure a doctor.

He moved to Springfield General Hospital, which became Doctors Hospital, and is now Ozark Community Hospital. He retired at the end of 2004.

William was chief of staff at Doctors Hospital and was named Family Physician of the Year by the Missouri Society of the College of Osteopathic Family Physicians. He was also a 1993 Missouri Osteopathic Medallion Award recipient and is past president of the Ozark, Southwest, and West Central Districts of the Osteopathic Association. He also held membership in the American Osteopathic Association, the Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, American College of Advancement for Medicine, and was an executive board member of the Physician Review Board. Locally he was a member of Rotary, North Springfield Betterment Association, Chamber of Commerce, and Boy Scouts. William's wife Karen is a member of Rachel Donelson Chapter DAR.

The Rachel Donelson Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution are proud to nominate William C. Sunderwirth as their Patriot of the Month and thank him for his dedicated service to his country.