

# Donald J. Sargeant '44-B

Last year at the Annual Resident Graduation Dinner, **Don Sargeant '44-B** was honored as the inaugural Loma Linda University Plastic Surgery "Alumnus of the Year" for his life long International medical service and contributions to plastic surgery.

Donald J. Sargeant, MD, was born on March 10, 1915, in Moscow, Idaho, the second of four children, to proud parents, Pastor Edwin and Hanna Sargeant. Dr. Sargeant is the product of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system, attending Walla Walla College and graduating from the Loma Linda University School of Medicine with the Class of 1944-B. While at Loma Linda, he met and married Verda White.

After completing an internship, an additional year of surgical residency, and two years in the armed forces, Dr. Sargeant began his international medicine service as the founding medical director at Bella Vista Hospital in Puerto Rico from 1948 to 1950. From this experience, he realized the need for complete surgical training. His formal general surgery training resumed at the White Memorial Medical Center from 1950 to 1951 and the California Lutheran Hospital from 1951 to 1953.

Dr. Sargeant was the inaugural plastic surgery resident at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) under the tutelage of George Webster, MD. In addition, he was chosen to travel to Uppsala, Sweden, where he became the initial Tord Skoog, MD, Fellow in affiliation with the UCLA training program.

The Sargeants were blessed with three children; Bonnie Sargeant Colson, Steven Sargeant, and Jeffrey Sargeant. Upon completing his residency and fellowship, Dr. Sargeant was strongly advised by his chairman, Dr. Webster, to look north to the city of Bakersfield where he could not only raise his family, but also fill a need for a well trained plastic surgeon. Thus, he began his practice in Bakers-



*Donald J. Sargeant '44-B  
with wife MayBelle in 1998*

field, California, in 1956. Other than a one year maxillofacial fellowship from 1960 to 1961 with Dr. Wilmer Hansen, MD, in Los Angeles, he practiced the entire gamut of plastic surgery in Bakersfield until 1972.

In 1971, while on a trip to England, he received an "SOS" call from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to help in the Masanga Leprosarium, a 350 bed hospital in Sierra-Leone, West Africa. He stayed for several months caring for leprosy patients, as well as children and adults with cleft-lip deformities. Dr. Sargeant returned to Bakersfield only again to receive a call in November 1972 to go to the Mwami Hospital, a 155-bed hospital in Zambia, where he stayed for three years until 1975.

In 1976, at age 61, the General Conference again requested his assistance at the new Seventh-day Adventist medical school in Montemorelos, Mexico. Dr. Sargeant not only practiced surgery while at the fledgling medical center, but also taught in the anatomy department of the medical school for the next eighteen years. Just prior to Dr. Sargeant's retirement at 79 years of age, his wife Verda passed away after a lengthy illness. Retirement led him back to his roots in College Place, Washington, where he recently married MayBelle Rice.

Dr. Sargeant dedicated a total of twenty-four years to international medical mission service. Through his life example, Dr. Sargeant continues to be a role model for many of his students, residents, and colleagues. He has not only served his God, his

country, and his family, but also exemplifies the motto of his medical school, "To Make Man Whole."

In honor of her father, Bonnie Sargeant Colson and her husband have established an endowment which will allow future generations of surgeons to experience and contribute to international mission service. □

*Under the direction of Mr. & Mrs. Colson, an extended family reunion was coordinated to honor Dr. Sargeant at the annual Plastic Surgery Resident Graduation Dinner.*

