

# THE UNION

April 29, 2016

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## Memorial bench dedicated to Nevada County community doctor, Galen Martin, to be unveiled in June

The family members of Galen Martin have rallied together to prepare a gift in honor of the late doctor, who spent over three decades of his life practicing medicine in the community, [before he died on Nov. 2, 2015, at the age of 69.](#)

“I just want them to see the bench, and remember what a wonderful human being, community member, and wonderful family practice doctor he was,” said Galen Martin’s wife, Janine Martin, a retired teacher at Union Hill Elementary School.

In honor of the well-loved community physician and longtime Nevada City resident, a memorial bench and a plaque, put together by his family, will be installed near the band shell of Pioneer Park, a place where Galen Martin walked, practiced Qi Gong, attended concerts, spent time with his family and raised his children.

Janine Martin obtained approval from Nevada City Council during a meeting on March 30. The memorial will be unveiled during a “Celebration of Life” ceremony slated from noon to 3 p.m. June 18, which Martin is putting together for everyone who loved and knew her husband.

“It’s a fitting tribute to Dr. Martin, who devoted his career to improving the community, from how he practiced medicine to how he lived his life,” said [Western Sierra Medical Clinic](#) Chief Physician Heather Lucas-Ross, who worked alongside Martin at the clinic for seven years.

Martin joined Western Sierra Medical Clinic in 2005, and served as a physician for nine years before retiring in 2014, when cancer drastically deteriorated his health.

But his medical career spanned four decades and stretched several facilities, which helped him cultivated many patients and colleagues along the way who knew and respected him.

Born on March 16, 1946, in Ontario, Ore., Martin spent his childhood in Palo Alto before attending UC Berkeley. After graduation, Martin continued to pursue a medical career by studying at UCSF School of Medicine.

He volunteered with the Peace Corps in Tonga for two years, and launched his career in Fortuna before relocating to Nevada County.

In the early 1990s, Martin joined the newly established [Sierra Care Physicians](#), where he met and worked with Dr. Alex Klistoff, a fellow family practitioner.

“We had a cordial atmosphere,” said Klistoff, “even though at times it became stressful, he always kept a smile on his face.”

Klistoff said he and Martin always watched out for each other and cross-cared for their patients when one of them was absent.

“He was very thorough, extremely bright, knowledgeable, up to date, and a good friend,” Klistoff said, adding, “he was a good listener and communicator, he would listen to the patients. He defines the word ‘caring.’”

And perhaps no one knew this attribute of Martin better than Jo Short, a Lake Wildwood resident and a patient of Martin for 25 years.

“We just followed him around wherever he went,” she said. “I trusted him; he was my best friend.”

She recalled sharing her sorrow with Martin when a head-on car collision killed her grandson.

“I was so devastated. I had an appointment with Dr. Martin that day, so I told him (about her grandson), I said, if he only lived, if he only lived,” Short said.

Short said Martin then comforted her with an anecdote from a friend, which made her feel a lot better.

“He always made me laugh, no matter what. I think he knew me better than I know myself,” she said. “I miss him. I miss him terribly.”

Janine Martin said that after being diagnosed with cancer nine years ago, Martin found comfort in Qi Gong, a Chinese exercise that integrates breathing techniques, physical postures and focused intentions.

During the last three years of his life, Galen Martin spent several days a week with local Qi Gong master [Homer Nottingham](#) and his students at Pioneer Park.

“He came every Saturday, he worked very hard, and did a great job for several years,” Nottingham said,

In fact, the memorial bench will be placed near the spot in Pioneer Park where Galen Martin practiced Qi Gong,

“She (Janine Martin) decided to build a bench for him to honor him and the place he spent his time,” said Nottingham.

Janine Martin said whenever she thinks of her late husband, his favorite Helen Keller quote comes to mind:

“What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose. For all that we love deeply becomes a part of us.”

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