



Dr. Roland Anthony Pattillo

June 12, 1933 - May 3, 2023

Roland Anthony Pattillo was born in DeQuincy, Louisiana to James E. Pattillo and Rhena Shaw Pattillo. He was their fifth child, with siblings James, Bertram, Ulric and sister Geraldine, who all preceded him in death. His baby sister, Carolyn Davis resides in Michigan.

Roland was proud to be a "cradle Catholic" blessed with Holy Baptism as a baby. He served for years as an Altar Boy, in other youth programs and vacation Bible school. And, in college he was elected to attend the funeral of (Saint) Katharine Drexel, the patron saint and benefactor for many African American and Native American parochial schools. He cherished the fact that he had attended the funeral of a Saint.

In Beaumont, Texas, Roland attended Blessed Sacrament Catholic School, to which life-time friends still return for class reunions, including Charles and Irma Anderson of San Antonio.

A toy doctor's bag, at Christmas, with candy pills, a plastic stethoscope and needles, triggered his interest in medicine. As an undergraduate, he attended Xavier University in New Orleans, and studied Chemistry under Professor Paytash, who encouraged his brilliance and interest by sharing exciting developments in medicine, including the ground-breaking discovery at the Johns Hopkins Medical School, where Dr George Gey showed the invention

of the roller-tube process that kept human cells alive, indefinitely. Dr. Gey announced that the cells were named HeLa.

Pattillo went on to St Louis University Medical School in Missouri, with a full scholarship. He did his Residency in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at the old Marquette University Medical School, the precursor to the Medical College of Wisconsin, where he served for 32 years. He was a prolific researcher, author, lecturer, always learning, while growing new cell models. He delivered hundreds of babies and helped thousands of women, while traveling domestically and internationally, sharing cancer knowledge, networks and contacts that would better the lives of families.

In true Catholic tradition, Dr. Pattillo longed to do something for Henrietta Lacks and her family who had been devastated by the rapidity of cancer growth and her death at the age of 31 years, with five beautiful children and a husband surviving her. He had learned HeLa was from an African American woman and was challenged as physician, advocate, clinician and a strong Catholic Christian to share the truths. When he met some of the Henrietta Lacks' family he committed to helping them. People all over the world know of Henrietta today and benefit from the many medical advancements directly associated with her cells. Dr. Pattillo remained active with lectures, Zoom meetings, and different Boards associated with the security of the Lacks family throughout his illness. His message throughout life was "Do no harm," part of the Hippocratic Oath that doctors pledge.

That also describes Roland A. Pattillo's life, his vision for the future, and his undying desire for all. He loved his St George Church family; and his Cursillo family that has stayed connected spiritually for over twenty years. He loved working the Hospitality Committee and Welcomed visitors, as well.

He will be sorely missed by his beloved wife, Patricia O'Flynn Pattillo, his

children, Catherine Pattillo (David Jefferson); Patrick Pattillo; Sheri Johnson; Mary Pattillo; bonus son, Todd 'Speech' Thomas (Yolanda); son, the late Michael Pattillo preceded him in death, as did Dr.

Terence N. Thomas and Bright Boateng. Grandchildren, Daniel (Rachel); Carolos Arriaga (Vicki); Camille and David Michael Jefferson: Van III and Benjamin Johnson; Jahi and Zoe Rene Thomas and great-grandson, little Daniel Thiago Pattillo. He is cherished by sister-in-laws, Liza Pattillo, Loretta Meadows and Marcia Jackson and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, neighbors, colleagues and the St. George family, especially Father Stephen Lyness; Father Henry Atem; Cathy and Fred Rook; Lois Jensen, Ann and Sal Messina; Elaine and Earl Behrens; Robert Himes, Michelle and Jim Gildemeyer, and Sarah and Frank Clark, who continuously supported Dr. Pattillo in every way they could.

The family acknowledges with deep appreciation Gentiva Hospice Service and their staff, as well as nurse assistants Sheronda Suitt; Kim Mc Elreath and assistants Beverly Kern, Soderia Rivera, and Charlotte Jones. We graciously thank Morehouse School of Medicine President and Dean, Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice, and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Dr. Roland Matthews, who generously helped us navigate the gravity of this moment. Members of the Lacks family will be present and the Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group from Baltimore, Maryland join us to celebrate Dr. Pattillo's life; and the Pattillo Family is humbled by your prayers and kindnesses. We sincerely thank each of you.

The memorial mass is Thursday, May 11, 2023, at 10:30 AM at St. George Catholic Church, Father Stephen Lyness, Presiding Pastor, 771 Roscoe Rd, Newnan, GA 30263, Father Henry Atem, immediate past pastor.

Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.mckoon.com.

Interment will follow at a later date at the St. John Cemetery of Collinsville, Illinois.

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory 770-253-4580

Cemetery Details

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory

38 Jackson Street
Newnan, GA 30263
care@mckoon.com
<http://www.mckoon.com>

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

MAY 11. 10:30 AM (ET)

St. George Catholic Church
771 Roscoe Road
Newnan, GA 30263

Tribute Wall



“ *McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Roland Anthony Pattillo*



McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory - May 10, 2023 at 02:40 PM

KP

“ *Dr. Patillo was indeed a scholar and a gentleman. We will miss his presence. His caring manner and presistant stand for justice remains triumph.*

Our prayers and condolences to the Patillo family on Dr. Patillo's passing.

1Joshua Group

Kermit Payne - October 29, 2023 at 10:42 PM

WS

“ *This is not a memory, but a voice of admiration. Dr. Pattillo is a shining example of the finest of humanity. We should all strive to be "Patillos." My sympathy and gratitude to the family and to all who knew and loved him. A true inspiration!*

wesley staples - October 24, 2023 at 11:53 AM

EN

“ I send condolences to Dr.Pattillo family, you will see him again on that day. I ask The Holy Spirit to comfort you in this difficult time. God Bless and Love❤️, Esther (Hawkins) Netz

Esther Netz - October 20, 2023 at 09:21 AM

EN

“ I met Dt.Pattillo at Milwaukee County Hospital in 1967 or 1968 as I worked in the Histology department. He was working on tissues research. His assistant Anna was from Sweden. He was such a gifted talent pleasant man. I will never forget his smile and the things he taught me about tissues in his research department. He got his Angel wings and now he is resting with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord needed him in heaven. Rest Dr. Pattillo, thank you for all of your God given gifts and talents.
Esther Netz

Esther (Hawkins) Netz - October 20, 2023 at 08:51 AM

EC

“ Dr. Pattillo was my life savior. He cured my choriocarcinoma in 1993 when he was at Medical College of Wisconsin! He would come in the room and say Elizabeth you look beautiful. We prayed 🙏 together. When he seen all the flowers my loved ones sent he said Elizabeth your going to do just fine because your loved. God bless you Sir 🙏 and your family. I wish I would of known sooner so I could have been there. Love you all 🥹

Elizabeth Cis - June 09, 2023 at 06:31 PM

LC

“ So saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Roland Patillo. He was a hometown hero and childhood friend of my father Walter L. Payne Jr.(Sonny Boy) They spoke periodically. Condolences to his wife & other loved ones as they go through this most difficult time. May you rest in heavenly peace Dr. Patillo 🌹

Lena Payne Chenier - June 09, 2023 at 07:47 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dr. Roland Anthony Pattillo.



May 09, 2023 at 12:03 PM