



Dr. John Victor Verner Jr.

April 26, 1927 - March 4, 2022

John Victor Verner, Jr. was born on April 26, 1927, in Greenville, S.C. to John, Sr. and Ruth Groce Verner. After graduation from High School, he enlisted on his 17th birthday in the Army Specialized Training Reserve Program, during which he would be sent to college until age 18, and after which he would enter active duty in the Infantry. Upon completion of basic training, he became the only one from his battalion accepted to Officer Candidate School. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the infantry at age 18, the youngest in his class. He served out the remaining years of active duty in the Military Government Operation in Seoul, Korea, working with the US effort to aid decimated Korea that had survived after long Japanese occupation.

After his service he completed his undergraduate studies at Duke University, where he joined Sigma Chi fraternity and was on the Freshman Advisory Committee. He entered Duke Medical School in 1950, also the year he met and married his college sweetheart Sally. He received his medical degree in 1954 as second in his class academically, having been elected to the honorary medical society Alpha Omega Alpha and winning the Mosby award for scholarship.

He completed five years of postgraduate training at Duke and the University of Michigan, culminating as Chief Resident in Medicine at Duke during the fourth year. After a year of basic research in Endocrinology, he was selected to join

the exclusive Private Diagnostic Clinic at Duke Hospital and to become a member of the faculty. While still in training he published 25 clinical papers in medical journals, including one in which he described a heretofore unheard of new clinical disease which bears his name today (Verner/Morrison Syndrome) and will be found in medical textbooks. This paper was later listed as one of the "Classics in Medicine", signifying that it had been listed in other papers often enough to qualify.

After three years of research, teaching, and practicing medicine, he realized that his heart was in the practice. After 15 years at Duke, he joined the Watson Clinic in Lakeland where he practiced for 35 years, serving as a member of the Executive Committee, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Chairman of the Department of Medicine at Lakeland Regional Hospital, President of the West Coast Academy of Medicine, and Chairman of the Florida Society of Medicine. For several years he taught as a Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of South Florida. Additionally, he was a long-time member of the Lakeland Yacht and Country Club, serving on the Board, and was a charter member of the Lone Palm Golf Club.

He was honored to receive a direct fellowship to the American College of Physicians and to serve two terms, or six years, as a governor of the Board of Internal Medicine, the national board which tests internists to certify them for excellence in the field. He also spoke at numerous meetings in the U.S. and three foreign countries, the latter being to present the syndrome which he had first described at Duke. He was quoted in a book by Pekkanen as one of the best doctors in the U.S. and was listed in "Who's Who in the South and Southwest" and "Who's Who in American Medicine". He was recalled to Duke in 1972 to receive the Distinguished Alumnus award.

During his 35 years of practice in Lakeland he always had a listed telephone

number and answered his own calls night or day, making him much loved by his patients. Many believed him to be, as Dr. Stead, the Physician in Chief at Duke Hospital had described him when asked for a reference. His short appraisal was, "John Verner is the best doctor Duke University has ever trained."

Twenty years before retirement from medicine, realizing that he would need to take over the family business interests eventually, he began to study economics and to make investments. He had an able mentor in his father-in-law, Lew Prosser. He said he was reprogramming his brain to be as filled with economic information and experience as it had been earlier in mastering the field of medicine. Knowing that doctors were noted to be poor businessmen, he was determined to be an exception to that rule, and he was.

He and his wife formed the Verner Foundation which has grown to a point that the family can continue making gifts to charitable institutions in perpetuity. He agreed with John Templeton that, "If you're giving while you're living, you're knowing where it's going". This was his greatest joy in later years, being able to give back to the community and educational institutions that he loved. There were major gifts to South Florida Baptist Foundation, YMCA Building, Plant City Veterans Park, Methodist Church Addition, Plant City Photo Archives, the Salvation Army of Lakeland, which he served as president, and Florida Southern College, where he was on the Board and Executive Committee for many years, receiving an honorary degree as Doctor of Public Service. He was Chairman of the Board of the First Florida Bank of Lakeland, Director of the First Florida Bank of Tampa, and CEO of numerous Plant City corporations.

He said his most important accomplishment was winning and marrying Sally in 1950. They celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary in August of 2021.

He was predeceased by his eldest son, John Victor Verner III, and his eldest grandson, Robert Llewellyn German. He is survived by a daughter Sally Lew and her husband Jeff Rucker, Florissant, Colorado; a son James, New York City; and son Ed and his wife Amanda, Plant City; 7 grandchildren, and 1 great grandchild.

John claimed to be a staunch Methodist and an aspiring Christian. Good Epitaph.

A funeral service will be held Wednesday, March 9 at 11:00 A.M. at First United Methodist Church, 303 N Evers Street, Plant City. Committal to follow at Oaklawn Cemetery, Plant City.

In lieu of flowers, consider a gift to the Care Group of First Methodist, 303 N. Evers St., Plant City, Florida, 33563, which provides flowers and care to shut in members. Expressions of condolence at HopewellFuneral.com.

Cemetery Details

Oaklawn Cemetery

N. Wheeler Road
Plant City, FL

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAR 9. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

First United Methodist Church of Plant City
303 North Evers Street
Plant City, FL 33563
<http://www.firstchurchplantcity.com>

Tribute Wall

BG

“ His Great grandson Lew German wanted to post this Prayer:

*Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow
I am the sunlight on the ripened grain.
I am the gentle Autumn's rain.
When you awaken in the morning hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry:
I am not there, I did not die.*

Love from Lew and Bob

Bob German - March 09, 2022 at 11:19 AM

JW

“ *Dr. Verner was always the quintessential gentleman, gracious host, consummate professional, and dedicated family man. He was a rarity among men. He made an indelible mark on the world, and though he will be missed, he leaves an amazing legacy. Rest in Peace.*

Joel Williams - March 08, 2022 at 09:40 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. John Victor Verner Jr..*



March 07, 2022 at 10:27 AM



“ *Doctor Verner was one of the finest men I ever knew and was a wonderful friend to plant city and he will be truly missed*

Franklin O'Neal - March 05, 2022 at 07:11 PM