

# Dr. Thomas Early dies; devoted service to Barona Indians

Dr. Thomas R. Early, a family practice physician who retired in 1978 to devote time to the Southern Indian Health Council on the Barona Indian Reservation, died of a heart attack Monday in his La Mesa home.

Dr. Early, 60, was an associate professor of family medicine at UCSD Medical School. Last year, he joined San Diego State University Health Services as a physician for students.

Co-workers at the Indian Health Council and SDSU Health Services described Dr. Early as "irreplaceable" and "trusted and truly loved" by his patients.

Janet Constantinou, acting executive director of the Southern Indian Health Council clinic, said Dr. Early was there "all day, every Tuesday and Thursday, from 1980 through 1986. He was by far the most popular physician we ever had out here. People loved him."

Family members said Dr. Early was interested in the culture and social structure of Indian families and their problems, as well as their health. "I believe he felt very close to the Indian community," said a university associate.

Mickey Pagan, assistant director of SDSU Health Services, said, "He was so kind, his interest was so genuine. He was so great as teacher, counselor, practitioner and friend; you just wished he could be your grandfather or your uncle.

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## Obituaries

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"He was such an integral part of our services. His death was such a terrible shock that we still can not comprehend that he is gone."

Dr. Early was born in Chicago. He graduated from UCLA Medical School in 1955 and spent the following year as a Navy doctor.

In 1956, he began his family practice in Lemon Grove and maintained his offices there until retiring in 1978. He was a former president of the Academy of Family Practice, and was in the San Diego Medical Society, the California Medical Association and the American Medical Association.

Survivors include his wife, Evelyn; four sons, Thomas Jr. of La Mesa, Jim and Dan of El Cajon, and Steve of San Diego; a daughter, Cathy Schubert of San Diego; a grandson; his mother, Julia Fenderson, and a brother, Martin, both of Los Angeles.

Memorial services will be at 1 p.m. tomorrow in Lemon Grove United Methodist Church. Inurnment will be in Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. Conrad Mortuary in Lemon Grove is in charge of arrangements.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Thomas R. Early Memorial Fund, UCSD Foundation, Q 011, La Jolla 92093. A medical scholarship will be established in his name.