

President's Page

By Mark A. Singleton, M.D., CSA President

Linda Herren: A Life of Devotion to the CSA

Many of you know that Linda Herren, a remarkable member of the CSA office staff, died on December 19, 2006, following a long illness. For those of us who knew and loved Linda, she was a gentle counselor, nurturing den mother, trusted friend, and keeper of CSA lore and history. Although she served in a variety of roles for CSA over more than 20 years, it was her tireless behind-the-scenes work and preparation that made so many of our society's activities appear effortless, and enabled our meetings to unfold with professionalism and style. There have been some difficult transition times for the CSA over the past two decades, and it has been Linda Herren who, with loyalty and humility, calmly stepped up to hold things together through the turbulence.



Linda Herren's life was truly intertwined with the CSA. Her father, Dr. John R. Raymond, a Burlingame anesthesiologist, served as CSA Secretary from 1964 to 1967, President in 1969, and finally Speaker of the House of Delegates from 1972 to 1975. Linda and Chuck, her husband of 37 years, were married during her father's term as CSA President. They had three children: Lisa, Lesley, and Ryan. Linda came to work for the CSA in 1983 and spent the next 22 years serving our society, guiding and advising countless elected officers, and especially reaching out to residents. She often referred to CSA resident members as her "children," and those who were fortunate enough to be involved in the annual Resident Research Competition, as her "special children." During her early years at the CSA office, when literally everything was done by hand, both Linda's mother Eva and daughter Lesley (then 13) would help out stuffing envelopes for member mailings. Lesley has been a well-established CSA office staffer for many years now, making her the third generation of family dedicated to CSA. Linda's granddaughter Treahna, also 13, has been helping Lesley at work recently too, so there are the makings of a potential CSA dynasty here!

Linda's love of children was evident to all who knew her well. She was deeply devoted to her grandchildren and provided a great deal of help to Lesley with the care of her four children. I also had a chance to experience Linda's tenderness and affection for children when she accompanied me, and a number of other CSA members, on an Interplast mission to Honduras 10 years ago. We spent two weeks performing reconstructive surgery on close to a hundred

President's Page (cont'd)

infants and children, and Linda and I both wrote short accounts of our experiences in a *CSA Bulletin* article. Linda's exceptional organizational skills were applied to our team's record keeping and operating schedule. As the leader of a 19-member team, including five independent-minded surgeons, I was eager to show her how natural it was for an anesthesiologist to be the logical organizer of the operating room schedule, the case flow manager, and general "go to" person for anything that came up during the course of our work. She, of course, understood this intuitively and, through her innate talents of organization and management, she anticipated my needs and those of the other team members, made my job a breeze, and created a dynamic duo of the two of us. Despite our pride in how well we negotiated the demands of this difficult work in a strange and spartan environment, it was something much more personally rewarding that gave Linda her best moments of the trip. That was helping the recovery room nurses, both the local hospital's and ours, to care for and comfort the babies and children who were recovering from their anesthesia and surgery. Her joy and pleasure were obvious to all of us who watched her taking a break from the secretarial chores to sit with a small child cradled in her arms, providing the "mothering" that was her essential and effortless gift.

Linda's attendance at the CSA Annual Meeting, last May in Palm Desert, was a



happy surprise to me and many other CSA old-timers. It was clear to all of us that she was right where she loved to be, and we all loved to have her there too. Although she was thin and weakened from her long illness, the sparkle in her eyes was as bright as ever. My lasting image of Linda is the way she would look directly at you when you talked to her, and how you felt she trusted and valued you, and how you knew that she was giving you all of her attention and affection in that moment. That was another of her special gifts, and she gave it to all of us with grace and elegance.