



Dr. Arthur Breece Breland

August 10, 1930 - May 23, 2020

Dr. Arthur Breece Breland passed away on May 23rd, 2020 at the age of 89.

It would take a novel to capture the colorful, exciting and heart-led life of a beloved man warmly known as “Dr. B” to thousands of children that walked into his dental office on Park Road in Charlotte NC, and prior to that, Murphy NC. And it all began in the South Carolina, low country town of Holly Hill.

Born the fifth child to Jacob Murray and Mary Welch Breland on August 10, 1930, Breece was raised in a loving and close-knit family. Later in life, he would regale family and friends with lyrical stories of growing up in the small town, working the family farm and grocery store, fishing the ponds and the blackwater river known as Four Holes Swamp. He so loved his family and the sandy dirt of Orangeburg county which was the backdrop to a constant stream of adventures with his siblings, especially with his little brother, Glenn. A shooting guard for the Holly Hill High School basketball team, Breece and his teammates went to the state finals.

On to Furman University where Breece studied chemistry, but really majored in his life-long passion of loving Joyce Coleman. They first met freshman year on a double date, she in the front seat with her date, he in the back with her roommate. Their first conversation in the car set the stage as he said to Joyce, “You talk too much.” And she turned around, gave him a Lauren Bacall-like glare and curtly replied, “I wasn’t talking to you.” So began their lifelong love affair.

Walking into the church to marry his beloved Joyce in September of 1951 with only \$17 and a draft notice from the US Marines folded in the jacket of his dark blue suit, their adventures took them through a wonderful life. Breece served in the Marine Corps, conducting basic training at Parris Island, SC and was then stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC from 1951-1954 during the Korean War. He and Joyce loved those “just starting out” days as they did those that followed in Chapel Hill, NC where Breece graduated from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Dental School in 1959.

By this time, Breece was the father to two of his children, daughter Melissa Ann (“Lissa”) and son, Coleman. Kimanne, the third child, would arrive as the family was living in Murphy, NC where Breece set up his dental practice that served western NC.

His office was packed with patients six days a week. Many in the western NC mountains struggled financially so Breece charged minimal fees and often let his patients and neighbors find another way to pay when money was short — many nights he drove home in a red jeep with freshly grown crops in the back seat. Other times, he would wave people off and say they could just pay whenever they could. Dentistry, for Breece, was never about money, it was a calling to help people.

In 1964, Breece and his family moved to Charlotte, NC where he built an incredibly large and popular pediatric dental practice with the help of incredibly talented and caring dental assistants who were like family to him. Kids were his speciality, he loved teaching them how to care for their teeth. And they so loved him back. The walls of his office were covered in photographs and pictures the kids would send to him as well as handwritten thank you notes in crayon or pen. Of course, for anyone who was lucky enough to hear him chatting with the children, his influence went way beyond dental health. He had an almost magical ability to personally connect with the children, ask them about what was going on in their life, sprinkle in some timely and highly valuable words of encouragement and guidance. And when the phone rang at night with an emergency, “Dr B” would hustle to the office, help the children and then refuse payment.

For years, he volunteered his dental services at Barium Springs Home for Children. He spoke often to different organizations around Charlotte, weaving dental health and life stories into a speech that often concluded with a standing ovation. He briefly studied journalism at Columbia University and was editor of the NC Dental Journal for three years. A member of Sardis Presbyterian Church for many years, he served as a deacon and in other leadership roles. Breece was a founding board member of Carmel Academy which later became part of Charlotte Country Day.

He was a Commander in the Naval Reserves, but it was the Marine Corps flag he would fly outside his house and a Marine veteran hat that he would don most days. Once a Marine, always a Marine. Breece could master anything. He was a pilot, scuba diver, snow skier, a true southern cook, avid traveler and a wise mentor to so many, consistently reminding people to not waste time and enjoy their lives. He adored his family and Joyce had his heart.

Of course his roots brought him back to Holly Hill all the time, helping with the beloved family pine tree farm and fishing the waters that he had known since he was a small boy. How fitting and wonderful that he will live on through his family and the leagues of people whose lives he made better. Here's a salute to a man who put so much goodwill into the world.

Breece was preceded in death by his parents, Jacob Murray and Mary Breland, his sisters Mary Elizabeth "Betty" Dantzler, Miriam "Mickey" Hildreth and brother Jacob Murray Breland Jr. He is survived by his wife Joyce Coleman; children Lissa Hamilton of Hickory, Coleman (Jill) Breland of Atlanta, GA and Kim (Tommy) Davant of Columbia; six grandchildren, Elyse Hamilton-Childres (Henry) of Charlotte, Christina (Erik) Kendall of Atlanta, GA, Thomas S. Davant VII of Atlanta GA, Tay Davant of New York, Breece Forrest Breland of Atlanta, GA, and Carly Breland of Atlanta, GA; great granddaughter Elle Kendall of Atlanta, GA; a sister Vernon B. "Punky" Russell of Holly Hill, SC and a brother, Glenn Marion Breland of Lancaster, SC.

There will be a private service at the family farm.

Memorials may be made to: Audubon's Beidler Forest Sanctuary, 336 Sanctuary Rd #3324 Harleyville, SC 29448 sc.audubon.org or Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region 7845 Little Ave Charlotte, NC 28226 hpccr.org.

Comments



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



cole andreason - June 12 at 04:10 PM



“ Dr Breeland was the Grandpa I never had; I truly was blessed to have him in my life. The first time I met him he looked at me and said, “Your name is Cole? I know you’re a good man, my son’s name is Cole,” he even told me that my smile reminded me of his Son’s, Cole. I had the privilege to go out to eat with Breece about every week on Friday s for about 6 years. He taught me so much about life and how to be a good man and father. Breece loved his Children so much, I got to know so much about his family. He called me up about every week to check in on me and see how I was doing when I was going through my Separation. He always asked me about my two little daughters and made me realize how important they are, he always joked with me and told me that it was great I had two daughters but it’s a shame I never had a son, like his. Breece truly loved Joyce, I hope one day I will grow to love somebody the way he loved Joyce. I had the opportunity to go down to his family farm in SC and fish with him, and eat barbecue many times. I got to hear his life story about growing up in SC and going through the military and becoming a dentist. He always said, “no matter how hard life gets, just keep moving/ marching.” I will truly cherish my conversations I had with him.
Cole Andreason

cole andreason - June 12 at 04:00 PM



“ Dr. Breland was a wonderful person. I was a patient of his when he practiced dentistry in Murphy, NC. I have always attributed his patience and knowledge to my having my teeth. I walked into his office very traumatized by an earlier experience with another local dentist; I am sure he saw many of us who had had such an ugly experience. To say he had the patience of Job would be an understatement. He was gracious and kind; he also could be candid which is what I needed. He looked me in the eye after a session and solemnly told me if I didn’t start taking better care of my teeth I would have dentures by the time I was 18. He told me the truth graciously, and I heeded it I have spoken kindly of him throughout the years; he did such a service to so many people. I treasure the gift of his skill, patience, determination, and understanding. He made the world a better place. Shalom, Billie Deaver Young



“ GARLAND JOHNSON lit a candle in memory of Dr. Arthur Breece Breland



GARLAND JOHNSON - June 10 at 11:41 PM



“ JIMMY JOHNSON FAMILY CLAY COUNTY MARIE AND GARLAND JOHNSON

GARLAND JOHNSON - June 10 at 11:41 PM



“ MARILYN HIPP lit a candle in memory of Dr. Arthur Breece Breland



MARILYN HIPP - June 09 at 08:41 AM



“ I was lucky enough to grow up down the street from Dr. Breland and we became neighbors again when I moved to a house on Montford Drive.

Not only was Dr. Breland my dentist but he also took care of my children. I will never forget when my 2 year old son fell one evening and knocked out two of his front teeth. In a panic I called Dr. Breland at home, he told me to put the teeth in milk and he immediately met us at his office. Not only did he comfort my son, he also calmly assured me everything would be ok.

I would frequently see him in his front yard and would stop and chat. He always had a smile, always asked about each member of my family and we would talk about his farm. We moved from the neighborhood about 10 years ago but when I drive through the neighborhood I always think of Dr. and Mrs. Breland.

Thank you for being so kind and touching the lives of so many. I know your spirit will always walk in the sunshine and your light will always shine!

Love to you and your family. Rest In Peace Dr. Breland!

Catherine Rea-Toomey

Catherine Rea-Toomey - June 08 at 08:22 PM



“ Nancy lit a candle in memory of Dr. Arthur Breece Breland



Nancy - June 08 at 02:32 PM



“ Aruthur looks so much like my husband. James is a Breland also. I just know that we are related. We live in Walterboro,sc Sorry for your loss.

Nancy - June 08 at 02:31 PM



“ Was heartbroken to read Sunday's Observer and to learn of Breece's death. Even though I had not seen Breece or Joyce in a very long time, my sweet memories of them as my neighbors and friends are still vivid.

He cared for all of his patients as though they were his own. All of the posted memories have similar themes, of his ability to deal with his patients on their level but they all came away with good advice on the care of their teeth.

Breece was smart, funny and a gifted story teller. He did love talking about the black water swamp and about his family.

Joyce, I miss you, and hope you feel the love and support from all who have shared a small part of the past you had with Breece. Love to you and your family.

Helena Rea

Helena Rea - June 08 at 11:02 AM



“ Our daughters became patients of his after our younger daughter at age 1 1/2 broke a tooth. Our older daughter up to that point could not handle the thought of a dentist in her mouth! Then came Dr. Breland!! The favorite part of their trips to see him were the water fights that inevitably erupted!! I will always be thankful for Dr. Breland's place in our lives! And yes, he even fixed the broken tooth!!

Genie O. - June 07 at 04:00 PM



“ Our 2 daughters were patients for as long as they could be. He was magic, all the kids would leave the waiting room without a parent. Never any tears!

Feel very privileged our girls were in his care. Deepest sympathy and also Congratulations on having such a wonderful person in your family.
Eileen and Gil Millsaps

Eileen Millsaps - June 07 at 02:44 PM



“ I was working on the computers in his Dental office, as payment Dr. Breland fixed my teeth, With teeth he was if there was one, he was a 'Tooth Whisperer' .My whole life ,and I was my late 50's at the time, I had fought dental work not with Dr. Breland, I didn't realize he was working on my Teeth. Above this I considered Breece the most complete man I had ever met, he was 80 and still working on a tractor in South Carolina on his farm. All in all a great guy, one the world will miss. Tony Nicholls

Tony Nicholls - June 07 at 01:11 PM



“ Dr. Breland was my dentist when I was a kid. I really don't remember too much, as I changed dentists as I grew up to be closer to where I lived. All I remember was that he had an office on Park Road, and he was a very kind and gentle person. He made an impression that I have never forgotten in my 60 years. Rest in peace Dr. Breland.

Linda Hastings - June 07 at 12:52 PM



“ My family was from Holly Hill, S.C. and my dentist was known as Tap Breland, who I am pretty sure was Dr. Breland's dad. They lived very close to us. I was born in Orangeburg, SC, since Holly Hill had no hospital. I remember when your family came to Charlotte, where I have lived since 1959.....small world isn't it? I am so sorry to learn of his passing and I pray for God's comfort for each of you.



“ Dr. Breeland was a great guy! Was my dentist from 12 years old until I was too old. When I met him I already knew I wanted to be a dentist...he was always really positive to me and was a great role model...I kept in touch with him. I'll never forget in 1996 when I was graduating from UNC Dental school; Dr. Breeland had told me he'd write a letter of recommendation to use to get my license... weeks went by...it never came... I finally got his staff and they said he had bypass heart surgery but there was an infection following.... anyways... he did get me the letter and he got through what was a really bad health crisis....and not long after he was still working....I'm not sure how old he was when he totally stopped working but I know how much he loved helping the children. God Bless Dr. Breeland and you all his family!

Brad Bills, DDS
Charlotte, NC

Brad Bills - June 07 at 11:22 AM



“ Dr. Breeland was a God send to me by way of my husband. He was my husband's pediatric dentist and when my preemie boys arrived and had needs as preschoolers he filled the need and set us off with a lifetime of knowledge in kids' teeth. Treats after supper while you still have the juices flowing to wash the teeth off, chocolate is good and hard or chewy, gummy candy is BAD and NEVER sour candy! "Those SOUR coated gummy things are like BATTERY ACID on their teeth!" Sour coated things are STILL forbidden in my house. Dentistry has been a positive for our kids and they have beautiful PERMANENT teeth! He was special and special to us during the last few years of his practice.

Robin McInnis - June 07 at 11:09 AM



“ What a sad day for all! I remember Dr. B so well. When my son, with Down Syndrome, was 3 years old, I was looking for a dentist who would be understanding, kind, compassionate and experienced. I found him in Dr. B. When Neville went to his first Mother's Morning out program, I received a call from his teacher saying Neville had fallen popped a tooth out! Well, it might as well have been his arm!! It was the only tooth he had! Dr.B helped me get through a young mom's panic and said that it was a baby tooth and his permanent would come in. All was good. It certainly bothered me more than my child. Thank you Dr. B for all your years of kindness, humor and compassion. My son has loved going to the dentist ever since!!

Kimberley Reynolds-Frederick



“ So sad to hear of Dr Breland's passing. He was so wonderful with my children and my nephews that saw him because my daughters told them they had to! One Halloween, we saw him, he asked the girls if they were going Trick or Treating? They said yes and I ask what to do about all that candy. He told them to go home and eat all they wanted and throw the rest away. Those children did exactly what he said, that is the affect he had on them. We all loved him very much !! Our sympathies to the whole family!

Brenda Evans Hall - June 07 at 09:56 AM



“ RIP Dr Breland. You were my childhood dentist. When ever I passed by your office I would say, "there's where my dentist is". I'll never forget the treasure chest that was in the office filled with goodies for kids to pick a prize from. Prayers and condolences to the family.

Cheryl Aldridge Britt

Cheryl Aldridge Britt - June 07 at 09:35 AM



“ Dr. Breland was my "office neighbor" on Park Road for a number of years. He became one of my favorite people. I will miss my talks with him and express my sympathy to his wife and family. He was a interesting and kind man who had a better understanding of life than almost anybody i have ever known. He lived a full life I know but am still very sad he is gone.

Raymond Lancaster

Raymond Lancaster - May 28 at 05:01 PM



“ I got to know Dr. Breland over the last 10 years from his retirement. I had just come off of a difficult divorce, and Dr. Breland was a source of comfort and wisdom to me with his advice and concern. I think about helpful things he told me concerning life even now. I'm sorry for your loss. I am thankful to have known him and will miss him.

Bill Mowry

Bill Mowry - June 08 at 11:37 PM



“ Dr. Breland was my children's dentist in the mid to late 70's...up until they were grown. He was so great with the children and they truly didn't mind going to the dentist. My thoughts and prayers are with each and everyone of his family. RIP Dr. B

MARILYN HIPPI - June 09 at 08:45 AM