

DONOR PROFILE

A LIFETIME OF CARING

DONALD BRIEF, MD, '55, HAS ALWAYS PREFERRED LOOKING FORWARD, not back, but some of the stories from his years at Dartmouth Medical School bear retelling. Near the top of that list: the day Ed Horton wasn't in class.

To understand its significance, you have to know a bit about the legendary Dean Rolf C. Syvertsen. Anyone who attended the Medical School from 1945 to 1960 can tell you what it was to be one of Sy's boys. "He scared the hell out of us," Brief says, recalling the Dean's warning—even before the dangers of cigarettes were clear—that anyone caught smoking would be expelled.

One day, as Syvertsen began a lecture, he noticed that one of his brightest students was missing. "He said, 'Where's Horton?'" Brief recalls. "One of the guys said, 'He's back at the AKK house; he's sick.' So the Dean said, 'Stay here.' He ran out, and we heard his car starting up. About 20 minutes later, he came back and said, 'What kind of doctors are you? I just took him up to the infirmary with a temperature of 104!'"

That lesson in priorities became part of the history of the Class of 1955. Brief took it on to Harvard Medical School, where he completed his MD and studied thyroid and parathyroid disease; to Vietnam, where he served as Chief of Surgery at the 24th Evacuation Hospital in Long Binh;

and to New Jersey's Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, where he specialized in endocrinology and oncology as Director of Surgery.

At 81, Brief still sees patients, still finds his work meaningful and fun, and still prefers looking forward, not back. But his faithful giving to the Medical School's annual fund over many years has made his loyalty clear. Recently, he extended his support of the Fund for Geisel with an IRA rollover gift—a tax-smart gift directly from his individual retirement account to the Medical School.

In June, Brief joined members of his Medical School class, including Edward Horton, MD, at a gathering in Hanover. Reminiscing about the values that defined their careers, they began—of course—with the day when Horton wasn't in class.

"We were a small, tight-knit group," Brief recalls. "The faculty really cared about us, and the Dean was very, very involved in ensuring the success of his graduates. It was truly a unique setting."

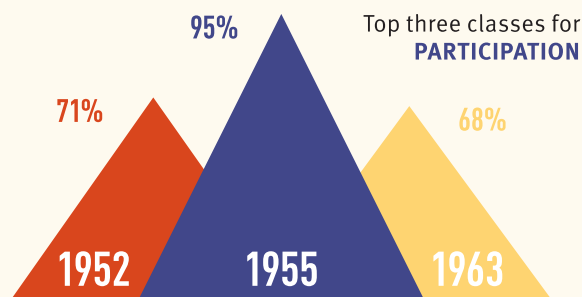
BY ANN KLEIN



Jon Gilbert Fox

Donald Brief ('55)

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