

Dr. Donald Harvey Lakin

June 17, 1930 - February 1, 2022

Donald Harvey Lakin's life will be celebrated in a public memorial service on Saturday, June 18, 2022, at the First Congregational Church (United Church of Christ) of Cadillac (200 E Harris St, Cadillac, MI 49601). The service will begin at 11:00 a.m.

Dr. Lakin and his wife, Pat, bought a cottage on Lake Mitchell in 1970. They became full-time Cadillac residents in 1985. Don was a founding board member of the Cadillac YMCA and played an instrumental role in the capital campaign resulting in construction of the Cadillac Area YMCA Dillon Community Center.

Don served on the Cadillac Area Schools Board of Education from 1988 to 2000 and was a long-time member of the Kiwanis Club of Cadillac. He was pleased to support many local organizations, including Eagle Village, OASIS, the After 26 Depot, Love Inc., Project Christmas, the Stehouwer Free Clinic, and the Cadillac Community Foundation. He is a former member of Christ United Methodist Church in Detroit and the Cadillac United Methodist Church. For the last eight years, the Cadillac Congregational Church (U.C.C.) has been Don's church home.

The Cadillac Area Community Foundation acknowledged Don and Pat Lakin's contributions to the Cadillac community in 2011 with recognition as Philanthropists of the Year.

Don was born on June 17, 1930, and raised on the east side of Detroit. After graduation from high school, Don attended the Detroit Institute of Technology

and then the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, from which he graduated in 1953 with his Doctor of Optometry (O.D.) degree. Dr. Lakin practiced in the Detroit area for over thirty years, establishing what is now Family Eye Care Associates.

In the 1980s, Dr. Lakin began working with the Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University and affiliated with what is now Advanced Optometry in Cadillac. Dr. Lakin was a leader in optometry and optometric education. The Michigan Optometric Association recognized him with a Lifetime Achievement Award and for five years he chaired the Association of Practice Management Education. He retired from the College of Optometry in 2000 as an associate professor.

Don's family celebrates him as a man who worked hard and played hard, providing for his family, and caring for his community. He enjoyed water skiing, sailing, swimming, bicycling, snow skiing, driving convertibles, and reading. In his seventies he completed multiple Pedal Across Lower Michigan and Michigander bicycle tours with his children and grandchildren. Don continued to both ski and bicycle into his eighties.

Don's wife, Pat, died in 2013, after nearly sixty-two years of marriage.

Daughter Candy Lakin, daughter-in-law Barbara Lewis-Lakin, a granddaughter, and a great granddaughter also predeceased Don.

Pat Steinhour, dear friend, and companion in the last years of his life, survives him, as do family members Bill Lakin, Jean Lakin, Cindy Morley, Mark Morley, Shawn Lewis-Lakin, John Smith, Kim Clark, and Jennifer Clark, twelve grandchildren and thirteen great grandchildren.

Dr. Lakin died on February 1, 2022. Memorial contributions in Don's name may be made to the Cadillac Area YMCA, 9845 Campus Dr., Cadillac, MI 49601 or www.cadillacareaymca.org.

An online guestbook is available at www.petersonfh.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUN 18. 11:00 AM.

First Congregational Church

Tribute Wall



“ Don was very friendly and helpful when I began practicing optometry in northern Michigan. He introduced me to the MOA and welcomed me into the camaraderie of the local optometric community. A true gentleman and wonderful representative to a profession he was very passionate for. Thanks Don. Rest in peace.
Ed Scarbrough, O.D.

Ed Scarbrough - April 19, 2022 at 08:44 AM



“ We appreciated very much my early years of practice with Don, and the time spent with his family. How he enjoyed his children was a revelation to us.
His optometric mentor , Dr. Paul Connelly, was very proud of him.
Our community of practitioners highly respected him.
You see him in his children.
Dr. Charles and Carmen Bongiovanni

Dr. Charles and Carmen Bongiovanni - March 03, 2022 at 11:43 AM




“ I had the great fortune of having Don as a mentor in my youth (he and my father were partners in practice) as well as at Ferris (an instructor in my first year of optometry school). That man was living life to it's fullest every time I saw him!

David Dueweke - February 03, 2022 at 09:40 PM



“ don was such a happy man,it was an honor and privilege to care for such a good man,may he rest in peace

tonia chase - February 02, 2022 at 11:06 PM

 Teresa
Seim

“ Don was one of my unforgettable professors at MCO. The class he taught was Practice Management. I have to admit that I didn't assert myself much, since I didn't think I'd ever own a practice. I did enjoy Dr. Lakin's teaching style though, and enjoyed his class and him as a person. He always had a smile and a kind word for you. Years after graduation and working in all kinds of practices I didn't like, I decided (of course) to open my own practice. So, I had to go groveling back to Dr. Lakin asking for help. He was so gracious and happy to assist in teaching me what I had missed, and so much more, in preparation to begin "my great adventure" as he called it. I'll never forget his encouragement, support and kindness when I wasn't trying so hard, and when I was giving my everything. He was a wonderful man, and I have to thank him for much of the success of my practice, still going almost 20 years later! Thank you, Dr. Lakin! So sorry for your loss, Bill and the rest of the Lakin Family.

Teresa Seim - February 02, 2022 at 09:28 PM

EL

“ The year I met Don was the year he turned 80. Dan wanted to go on a bike ride before work, and convinced me to join in by telling me, “my 80 year old grandpa is going” making it sound as if the ride would be short and sweet... little did I know that a short and sweet bike ride with Grandpa Don was going from Cadillac to Tustin and back. ❤️ He was an incredible man.

Elizaberh Lakin - February 02, 2022 at 08:23 PM

RM

“ Don was a great role model for us all.

Robert Molter - February 02, 2022 at 01:09 PM

RB

“ February 2, 2022

In memory of Don Lakin

Don was a very friendly and positive person. He had a fine sense of humor. He loved his family and friends. So many small and big unique moments that we were able to experience together remain stored in our hearts forever.

Our transatlantic connection existed for many years. Part of our family is currently living in the USA and the grandchildren speak American!

Dear big family, our thoughts are with you in these hours and the coming days.

With love Regula & Gian Baumann Switzerland

Regula Baumann - February 02, 2022 at 10:34 AM

JD

“ *To Bill and Jean, Cindy and Mark, Shawn, John, and the rest of the Lakin family: thank you for sharing your dad with us! (sorry about that, John)*

John Doud - February 01, 2022 at 05:32 PM

JD

“ When I think of Don Lakin, the word "Goodness" comes to mind. His unconditional generosity, his intellectual curiosity, his every-Sunday presence in our church, and his positive spirit provided life-affirming examples for the rest of us, which will live on in our congregation, our Cadillac community, and beyond. His memory will continue to be for us a great blessing. To Bill and Jean, Cindy and Mark, Shawn, and the rest of the Lakin family: thank you for sharing your father with us!

-John Doud, Minister (First Congregational UCC of Cadillac)

John Doud - February 01, 2022 at 05:08 PM

SB

I will remember Don Lakin as a kind man who always had a smile for everyone! His gentle manner was welcoming to those who had the pleasure of knowing him. He will be greatly missed!

-Sue Beach, neighbor and friend 🙏❤️🙏

Susan Beach - February 02, 2022 at 10:36 AM

MB

As a teacher, Dr. Lakin's mentoring was instrumental in helping me realize how attainable opening private practice could be. He was proud of my business plan and invited a banker to speak with me. The plan was viable. Seven years later, when the student debt was paid off, the plan was executed. I often think of Dr. Lakin with appreciation. He certainly made a difference in my life.

Marsha Brandon - February 02, 2022 at 07:48 PM

DG

Dr. Don Lakin was surely a very valuable and influential person in my life when I started as a young optometrist and joined Dr. Don in practice at Eastpoint, MI. He always was helpful in providing "corrective criticisms" as I continued to learn and mature.

Dr. Fred L. Von Gunten

Dr. Fred VON GUNTEN - February 03, 2022 at 02:43 PM

DC

To Bill and the rest of the clan: I first met Don when the initial set of 3 faculty members were introduced to the people who instrumental in starting the College of Optometry at Ferris State College. Don was one of the movers and shakers who managed to get the MOA and the state legislature behind the efforts to start the College. My life would certainly be a lot different if not his efforts. Later he joined the faculty and really brought life to college meetings with his wit and humor. To those of us who knew him as a colleague and friend, he will be missed. His legacy will live on in his endowed scholarship for optometry students at MCO. Thank you Don for enriching all the lives you touched.

Dr. Bob Carter

Dr. Bob Carter - February 04, 2022 at 09:19 AM

KB

To Bill and Family: What an enthusiastic and positive Father you guys had. He always welcomed me into your family on many a ski trip and water skiing adventure. He led a full life even after retiring from his practice. God bless him.

Kevin Biglin

Kevin Biglin - March 31, 2022 at 01:20 PM

LS

Don Lakin prescribed my first glasses in 3rd grade and was my mentor when I needed help choosing a school to become an Optometric Technician back when that was a new thing!! THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU,!!!!!!

Linda Diane Simpson - May 11, 2022 at 01:50 PM