

## FAFP JUNE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Daniel Van Durme, MD, FAFP

Tallahassee, FL (1961-2023)



FAFP Past President (’96), Daniel (Dan) James Van Durme, MD, age 61, passed away on May 30, 2023, in Tallahassee, FL. He was born on September 25, 1961, in Dansville, NY. Dan is survived by his wife of 42 years, Patricia, his children Felicia, Stephanie (Shawn), and Luke, his grandchildren Bella and Killian, and his siblings Norah, Jean, Michael, Claire, Tommy, Mark, Matthew, Rachel, and Patrick. He was a gifted teacher who won numerous awards and mentored hundreds of doctors worldwide. At USF, he was one of the family doctors for the Tampa Bay Lightning, Tampa Bay Mutiny, and USF Athletics. While at FSU, he was instrumental in forming the Family Medicine Scholars and the Chapman Chapter of the Gold Humanism Society. Under his direction, FSU Primary Health was conceived and implemented, maintaining the mission of the school to provide doctors to underserved, rural, minority, and elderly populations.

“I first met DVD under a dusty, thatched roof in rural Nicaragua. He handed me laminated instructions for how to organize our supplies and the process we would follow for the week-long global health trip. This collaborative project was dear to him, and he wanted to ensure we had a shared vision to empower the community we were serving. He was simultaneously drill sergeant, Mother Theresa, tour guide, preceptor, and friend. This comes as no surprise to those who knew DVD – he approached everything he did with intention, passion, and love. Although he was a powerhouse in the realm of family medicine and global health through innumerable trailblazing projects, consulting, and leadership positions, his priority was supporting the people in his life. The outpouring of tributes I’ve seen from previous students, residents, and colleagues describe him best: “ultimate role model” “epitome of mentor” “embodied everything that one hopes to be as both a doctor and person” “committed to serving and uplifting others” “a giant in the medical community” “exemplary leader” “infectious passion” “a second father” “always a shoulder to cry on or offer encouragement” “because of him, I took the shot and it changed my life.” I am humbled to have walked with Dan Van Durme in this life, and my own light shines brighter because of his flame. May his passion, love, faith, and commitment serve as an inspiration to us all.”

- **Christy Cavanagh, MD**

“Losing Dan truly is like losing a close family member. Our paths have crossed or been directly linked since we were both resident members of the FAFP. We served together on the Board of Directors of the FAFP and had overlapping responsibilities in the AAFP. Our children literally grew up together in the FAFP. When Dan was elected to the AAFP Board, I was appointed and then elected to the Delegate position he previously held. In that role, I had the honor of serving as his campaign manager three years later, when he ran for the office of President-elect. While that was an unsuccessful campaign, we were both able to look back on it a few years later and note that had it not been for that defeat, he would not have been available to answer the call when we were searching for my replacement as Chair of the Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health at the FSU COM. As believers, we knew it was a path that was not orchestrated by either of us.

As a fellow family physician, it was an honor to work with Dan, both in his role as department chair, and when he shifted into the role of senior associate dean for clinical and community affairs. His hard work forming community partnerships and developing clinical practices, will forever be a part of his legacy, but I know it was his very successful and sought-after role of teaching and mentoring students, residents and junior faculty that he loved even more. The world has a lot more family physicians specifically as a result of Dr. Van Durme’s mentorship and role-modeling. He was highly regarded as a CME speaker for the FAFP, AAFP and several other organizations. Thanks for the opportunity to share something about my friend and colleague, Dr. Daniel Van Durme – gone way too soon!

- **Alma Littles, MD**

“I first met Dan when he was on faculty at USF and he was one of the greatest influences on me to pursue Family Medicine - a sentiment that hundreds of others seem to share. I later joined USF and FSU as faculty where Dan took me under his wing and became my mentor and my friend. His personality was a shining light to students, as everyone who has met him can attest. I yearned to be a thousandth of what he was for students. He had a life-changing and career-changing effect on every student he worked with. He is the person you’re drawn to, when he walks into a room. He taught and mentored thousands of students, and always had time for them. He was a paragon of Family Medicine, having been the FAFP President and running nationally for the AAFP. He was a staunch advocate for all Family Doctors, and I can genuinely say that he is the best Family Doctor I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. His knowledge was incredible, especially about dermatology where I feel that he was on equal knowledge as some dermatologists as well as sports medicine. He became a state leader on Covid-19. He was always willing to consult. We stood together at the top of volcanos over open pits of lava many times in the 15 trips to Nicaragua, where I saw his unmatched passion for serving the underserved locally and globally. As I have stated to others, he was a renaissance man outside of medicine: broadly read, enjoyed woodworking, created incredible gardens, an avid sportsman, a coffee connoisseur, a master beer brewer, a board-gamer, etc. He was a devoted husband and

father, and he was always there for his friends and family through good and bad times. We will miss your shining light DVD.”

- **Robert Campbell, MD**

“In life we will have many teachers and persons who will be there to guide us. We will also have friends who will be there to make the path easier and more enjoyable. It is rarer to have someone who plays both roles. Dan was that person for me. He changed my mind about what specialty I would choose and thus changed my life forever. I remember as a 4th year medical student running into him at the hospital one day and wondering what was this family doc, who I had worked with in clinic, doing here? Well for those of you who know Dan, he had a lot to say about why he was also caring for his patients in the hospital. The idea of being there for those he cared for, wherever they needed him, convinced me that family medicine was what I was looking for. I went on to complete residency at the same place Dan had, and was not surprised to often hear nurses, physicians, and staff tell stories about him. Working together at USF, he became not only my Yoda, but my dearest friend and brother. He was always there to lend a hand and a big old shoulder. He cared for my parents and my sons and even after he left USF, he was always a text or call away. Much of what I have become is because of Dan. How I look at patients, how I teach, how I find myself speaking and moving when presenting, and even what I enjoy most about family medicine, comes from seeing what he did. I have strained to be just half the person he is. And though he may say that it would not be possible given my height, just being half as good as Dan is a lot more than I thought I could ever be. I do know and have great faith that Dan has a wonderful spot in heaven. He’s probably already in charge of something and organizing a group. I pray now for Pat and the kids and the rest of us who now continue on without his presence. We may be less without him, but we are better because of him. I love my brother, Dan, and I will miss him very much.”

- **Eduardo Gonzalez, MD**