



**Miles J. Edwards, MD**  
**June 21, 1929 – March 23, 2006**

Distinguished doctor, devoted ethicist, wise and caring mentor, faithful friend, gifted teacher and above all, honorable and compassionate humanitarian. These are the themes that recur again and again as family, colleagues, friends and a multitude of admirers have reflected on the life and accomplishments of Miles Edwards.

Such lofty accolades would assuredly be discomfiting to a man of such singular humility and grace. For Miles worked quietly, often behind the scenes, nurturing each individual relationship with student, patient or colleague with his unfailing blend of patience, compassion and respect. Always alert to a teaching moment however it might present itself, he was as comfortable in the lecture hall as he was in deep, intimate discussion with a dying patient or troubled family member. He was widely respected as the author of countless published papers, and also a master of the nuance - the considered response that added instructive dimension to even the smallest encounter in his daily rounds. As a teacher, Miles was unparalleled. And it was in this role that his integrity, sensitivity and full-hearted caring were so often revealed.

Shortly before his death, Miles reflected on the role of the physician. He spoke of the need for a “deep understanding of the patient’s experience and each person’s unique value as a human being” as well as the importance of “having respect for the patient’s self respect.” Far from abstract concepts, these were deeply held and abiding principles for him. They guided his practice of medicine; they fueled his passion for research and medical ethics; and they inspired his role as mentor and teacher.

When asked how he wanted to spend his remaining days, he said simply that he would like to continue teaching. And so he did. Not surprisingly, some of his greatest teaching moments came through his own last illness. He taught us not just through his discerning intelligence and insightful observations, but also through the remarkable courage, unfaltering honesty and graceful dignity with which he faced his own vulnerability and death. He lived his lessons. His soul and his role were in eloquent alignment, and his life was in true harmony with his beliefs and teaching.

Our world has been greatly enriched by Miles’ humanity and professionalism. He has given us hope, high ideals and heightened awareness of what compassionate medical practice should be. The lessons he taught us will go on long into the future, serving to comfort the many who mourn the loss of this extraordinary man.