

Walker L. Ray 62C 65M 68MR

A sense of humor. A caring nature. Approachability. Intelligence.

Those important qualities helped make Walker Ray a successful pediatrician in Atlanta for 38 years. They also helped guide him into leadership roles at Emory. But those weren't the only ones. There is also humility.

"I was asked to be involved with Emory," Ray said. "I did not simply show up and volunteer. I think many times, for service, there has to be a portal that's attractive, an opportunity that presents itself, or an environment that's very receptive to establishing that first relationship."

That first relationship was with the board of the Emory Medical Alumni Association, where Ray served for a number of years leading to a two year term as president. During this time he was honored by being inducted into Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA), the national medical honor society. This was followed by his selection to the Emory Alumni Board (EAB)—where he also served a term as president.

Sometimes when alumni leaders hold such prominent leadership roles, it is common for them to take a step back when those roles are completed. Not Ray. In fact, he chose to challenge himself in new ways. Always a man of faith, but never previously involved with the Candler School of Theology, Ray accepted a new position as co-chair of Candler's Committee of 100, a liaison group to the United Methodist Church. And he continues his longtime relationship with the School of Medicine by serving on its campaign committee.

Ray's service is not limited to his alma mater. His contributions to his profession are noteworthy, not the least of which are the thousands upon thousands of healthy patients he treated over his nearly four decades in private practice.

"The children were a lot of fun to relate to," he said, speaking of the satisfaction he felt as a pediatrician. "Children might come in sick with meningitis, pneumonia, or other illnesses. If you made the right diagnosis, with the right treatment, they were up running around the ward, smiling at you playing hide and seek underneath the exam table."

Ray has served on the Board of Trustees of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston, and he has chaired the medical staff at Egleston and the pediatrics department at DeKalb Medical Center. He also has held top posts in the DeKalb Medical Society and the Medical Association of Georgia (MAG). In 2003, he received both MAG's Distinguished Service Award and the DeKalb Medical Society's Julius McCurdy Citizenship Award, which recognizes outstanding community service by a DeKalb County physician. He currently serves as vice president of the Physicians Foundation, a national foundation dedicated to improving the quality of healthcare for all Americans.

Finally, family remains prominent in his life. Ray and his wife Nancy have three daughters and five (soon to be six) grandchildren.

