

Dr Auvil Looks Back on Career in Medicine

By Wayne Towner

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Parkersburg – For over a half-century, Dr. Loretto Auvil 78, of Parkersburg has been serving her patients – up to three generations of them – at her office in South Parkersburg.

She was recognized in April for her service to her community and her profession.



Dr. Auvil has been practicing medicine since 1957, having been in continuous practice for about 53 years. I imagine it's not common, but I don't know how rare it is, "Auvil said of her 50-plus years as a practicing physician.

She is originally from Beaverdam, VA, just north of Richmond, VA. She met her husband, the late Dr. Donald Keith Auvil of Parsons, WV while both were in medical school at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. They practiced in Beaverdam for about three years, during which time she also spent a year-long internship with Camden-Clark Memorial hospital from 1957-1958. The Auvils came to Parkersburg in 1960. Auvil has been in practice since that time, always in her office at 806 Division Street in South Parkersburg, Her husband also practiced there until his death in 1975. "It was more like a country practice than it is now," Auvil said of her early years in Parkersburg. "It's evolved into more of a city practice, but then it was more country. We did home calls...it was more rural than it was now," she said.

Dr. Auvil was one of three female doctors practicing locally at the time. She knows of other women doctors who had to deal with issues involving being a woman and a doctor during that time, but she said she was very fortunate and never had any problems. As a doctor in the early 1960's she did a lot of home calls, office practice, home delivery of babies, appendix and tonsil removals, injury treatment, x-rays and other types of general practice. She remains a general practitioner now, but doesn't do as much as she once did due to changes in medicine, law and regulation, and the growth of specialization in medical practices.

"There are some areas where the practitioner still do pretty much as I did when I started but they are in very remote areas. Most of the more populated areas have regulations now that require that specialists do a lot of the things that we did when I started, she said."

She said her patient base has remained steady over the years and people she treated years ago have brought their children and later their grandchildren to see her for their medical needs. "It is a gratifying experience and I've enjoyed it" She continues to maintain a full schedule at her Division Street office and also does rounds at Camden-Clark Memorial and St. Joseph's hospitals as a general practitioner. She no longer provides pediatric services, primarily serving patients ages 16 and older with some restrictions". All of that has change since we started. Office calls were \$3 and delivered were \$25 and we thought that was big money."

In April, She was recognized as the "Family Doc" of the year award at the WVAFP 58th Annual Scientific Assembly held in So. Charleston. The award reads **"IN RECOGNITION OF A LIFETIME OF SERVICE AS A DEDICATED FAMILY PHYSICIAN WHO HAS EARNED THE CONTINUED RESPECT OF HER PATIENTS AND FELLOW PHYSICIANS"**.

“It came as a surprise and it’s a good thing it was a surprise, it’s not my personality” I had no idea it was going to be awarded to me.”

Dr. Auvil has five children, 16 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She said she has no immediate plans to retire, wanting to help get all her grandchildren through college first. “I still have a few that need to go and I’m trying to help them and support them and pay off my debts”, she said with a laugh.

