

## Merton Proctor, Renton Physician Who Died Day After His Retirement

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Nancy Montgomery

Dr. Merton Proctor had many plans for his retirement. He talked with his pastor about maybe doing missionary work or becoming the parish doctor. He had so many interests: history, computers, golf and music among them.

But Dr. Proctor, 59, died of a heart attack last Wednesday (May 15) - the day after he retired.

A memorial service was held last week at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Bellevue. Dr. Proctor was a church stalwart who sang in the choir and helped in any way he could, said Pastor Jim McEachren.

"Anything we ran, if he had time, he was here," McEachren said. "He was very fervent in the parish, and its ministry and outreach. He'd already found who he was as a man, as a doctor, as a child of God. He had great affection for living."

Dr. Proctor believed in lifelong education and had recently become interested in the history of the early church.

"He was like Velcro, whatever he got hooked into, he got very, very attached to," said McEachren. "In trying to understand church history, he was always asking, 'Where did that doctrine come from? Who was St. Augustine?' He had a very, very inquiring mind. He always wanted to know where something came from and how it worked."

For the past several years, Dr. Proctor, a family practitioner, had been a colleague of Dr. Baird Bardarson at the Cedar River Clinic in Renton. He provided women with abortions, Bardarson said, and had been doing so since 1970, when Washington voters made abortion legal in the state.

"He felt that he had served the women of the state of Washington as much as any doctor in the state," Bardarson said. "But he indeed felt it was time he retired because of interest in other areas. Intellectual pursuits, writing, philosophy.

"He was a nice guy, a mild-mannered man. He was a good doctor. I'm going to miss him."

Dr. Proctor grew up in Montana. He attended the University of Washington Medical School and began his practice in Wenatchee. He moved to Bellevue in 1974.

He'd had a previous heart attack about 10 years ago, Bardarson said, and was revived by his son. Soon after, he underwent heart bypass surgery.

Dr. Proctor is survived by his wife, Gail, his children, Wanda Harris of Kirkland, Nadine Arris of Lincoln City, Ore., and Jody Proctor of Seattle; his stepchildren, Jim Perry of Chelan, Jesse Perry of Monroe and Jody Perry of Cle Elum and five grandchildren.

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