



City of Cambridge

R-7.

IN CITY COUNCIL

November 5, 2001

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR BORN
COUNCILLOR BRAUDE
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR DECKER
MAYOR GALLUCCIO
VICE MAYOR MAHER
COUNCILLOR REEVES
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

WHEREAS: This City Council was deeply saddened at learning of the death of Thomas S. Durant, M.D. on October 30, 2001; and

WHEREAS: Thomas was the Assistant Director of Massachusetts General Hospital who was considered the angel of mercy from Boston because of his work easing the misery of the sick and dying refugees from four continents; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Durant received many honors and awards for his work whose primary focus was on helping people who are less fortunate; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Durant worked at Massachusetts General Hospital for thirty-three years and was a lifelong resident of Dorchester; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Durant was a graduate of Boston English High School, Boston College and Georgetown University; and

WHEREAS: In the 1940's, while serving in the Army in Korea, Dr. Durant vowed to return to that part of the world when he saw a boy who had received inferior medical care; and

WHEREAS: In the 1960's, Dr. Durant was in charge of civilian medical clinics in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS: Thomas was a Boston Red Sox fan, an amateur photographer, and a rugby player; and

WHEREAS: Thomas's passing will leave a void in the lives of all his surviving family, his wife of 49 years Fredericka (Finn) Durant; his sons Stephen, Joseph P., and Sean F. Durant; and his five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS: Thomas will be sorely missed by all he touched and loved; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record extending its deepest sympathy to the family of Thomas S. Durant, M.D. at this time of such personal loss; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to the Durant family on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council November 5, 2001.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Margaret Drury". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

Councillor Sullivan

all

12

WHEREAS: This City Council was deeply saddened at learning of the death of

Thomas S. Durant, ^{MD} on Oct. 30, 2001; and

Whereas: Thomas was the ~~Associate~~ Assistant Director of Mass General Hosp. who was considered the Angel of Mercy from Boston because of his work easing the misery of the sick & dying Refugees from Four Continents; &

Whereas Dr. Durant received many honors and awards for his work whose primary focus was on helping people who are less fortunate than us; &

Whereas: Dr. Durant worked at MGH for 33 yrs and was a lifelong resident of Dorchester; &

Whereas: Dr. Durant was a graduate of Boston English High School, Boston College and Georgetown University; &

~~SERVING~~
SERVING IN KOREA

Whereas: In the 1940's ~~Dr.~~ While in the Army, Dr. Durant vowed to return to that part of the world when he saw a boy who had received inferior medical care; &

Whereas: In the 1960's Dr. Durant was in charge of civilian medical clinic in Vietnam; &

Whereas: THOMAS WAS A Boston Red Sox Fan, AN Amateur photographer,
And A Rugby player; and

WHEREAS: THOMAS'S passing will leave a void in the lives of all ~~his~~ her surviving
family, his wife OF 49 yrs Fredericka (Pinn) Durant;
his sons Stephen, Joseph P. And Sean F. Durant and
his 5 grandchildren

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entire City Council.

Obituaries

Dr. Thomas Durant; attendee of the dispossessed

By Brian C. Mooney
GLOBE STAFF

For 20 years, Thomas S. Durant pushed Massachusetts General Hospital to share its world-famous medical expertise with refugees around the globe. Yesterday the international aid community mourned the death of a man many considered the angel of mercy from Boston.

Dr. Durant, 73, a physician who was assistant director of MGH, devoted much of his adult life to easing the misery of tens of thousands of sick and dying refugees in squalid, disease-infested camps at trouble spots on four continents.

He died yesterday at Mass. General, ending a 13-year battle with cancer.

"He got the hospital focused on the fact that there is a very big world out there that we are part of," said Dr. James J. Mongan, president of MGH. "We're going to miss so many things about him — his integrity, his incredible sense of humor, and all those living connections to the city and government."

Mass. General plans to establish a fellowship in refugee medicine in Dr. Durant's name. The hospital will make an initial contribution and raise private contributions to train and underwrite the work of physicians and nurses who will continue Dr. Durant's mission abroad.

"He was always able to remind us of our responsibility to help those who aren't as fortunate as we are," said Paula Bruck, a registered nurse at Mass. General, who worked with Dr. Durant in recent years at a clinic in Honduras.

For his efforts, Dr. Durant received many honors and awards, the most prestigious being the Humanitarian Award from the United Nations in 1995, the UN's 50th anniversary.

He was extremely modest, however, and rarely spoke of the awards, treating the accolades as knick-knacks. Most were stashed and forgotten.

A legend in the international aid community, Dr. Durant was also a major figure in Boston. He worked for 33 years at MGH, and also worked closely with leading political figures. Dr. Durant also

ran interference for hundreds of sick people who sought treatment at the hospital.

Dr. Durant saw the world but never abandoned Dorchester. All his life, he resided in St. Mark's Parish. He met Fredericka Finn, his wife of 40 years, when they attended the parish grammar school. They raised three sons on Melville Avenue.

Stephen Durant, a clinical psychologist at MGH, said his father lived a rich, full life. "He didn't get cheated," his son said. His father aspired, he said, to the ideals of being a man for others, as the Jesuits had taught him, and to the words of the gospel according to Luke: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."

Dr. Durant graduated from Boston English High School and two Jesuit schools — Boston College and Georgetown University, where he received his medical degree. Besides his family and his work, BC was one of the great loves of Dr. Durant's life. The others included Mass. General and the Boston Red Sox.

He complained that the Sox brought him considerably less joy. The only child of hard-working immigrants — a French-Canadian father and an Irish mother — Dr. Durant was moved to help others during Army service in Korea in the late 1940s when he saw a boy who had received inferior medical treatment and was suffering terribly.

"He made a promise that if he ever got the chance, he'd go back to that part of the world and do something to help," his son Stephen recalled.

In the late '60s, Dr. Durant, by training an obstetrician-gynecologist, went to Vietnam and was in charge of civilian medical clinics in Saigon and the Mekong Delta for USAID, the relief organization. During the 1968 Tet Offensive, he survived the shelling of one of the clinics.

It was also in Vietnam that he met Dr. John H. Knowles, then general director of MGH, who was on a fact-finding tour during the war. Knowles would later bring Dr. Durant to Mass. General.

Dr. Durant returned to Southeast Asia, spending eight months

in refugee camps during the slaughters by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

Under the auspices of the American Refugee Committee, and, in recent years, Concern Worldwide, Dr. Durant's humanitarian travels also took him to Afghanistan in the mid 1980s, to Kurdish camps on the Turkish-Iraqi border after the Persian Gulf War, to Somalia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Mozambique in Africa, Honduras in Central America, and Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Albania in the Balkans.

Mozambique and Honduras were natural disasters, caused by flood and hurricane. The rest were human-made calamities, the product of civil war atrocities or genocide.

In 1999, he left a hospital bed in Germany, where he had undergone experimental immunotherapy treatment for his cancer, and flew directly to the Balkans to work in a refugee camp.

In May, he made his last trip, to Honduras, where MGH established a partnership with a local hospital after Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

A trip in June to Ethiopia was canceled when his health began to



Dr. Thomas Durant, Sox cap in hand, helping refugees in Macedonia.

fall.

Dr. Durant was a man of many other talents. He was an outstanding amateur photographer, creating the powerful images for his slide show that depicted the horrors he saw around the world. The presentation closed with a shot of Fourth of July fireworks over the Charles River, a reminder to his

audience of the freedoms and privileges they enjoy in the United States.

He took up the game of rugby at age 47 and played it with a fierce competitiveness that almost compensated for his small stature and advancing years. He played his last match at the age of 70 in a contest with his son, Stephen, and

grandson, Brian Durant, then 15.

Besides his wife and son, Stephen of Dorchester, Dr. Durant leaves two sons, Joseph P. of Medford and Sean F. of Boston, and five grandchildren.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated Friday at 10 a.m. at St. Mark's Church. Burial will be in Cedar Grove Cemetery, Dorchester.

NEW DATE
Saturday, March 23, 2002

Secure Your Financial Future

The Boston Globe

MONEY MATTERS™

Personal Finance Conference and Expo

Saturday, March 23, 2002 • World Trade Center, Boston • 7:45 am to 5:30 pm

Please note the event date has been changed from Saturday, November 17.

We apologize for any inconvenience.

To register online, visit www.bostonglobe.com/moneymatters.

You may also register by completing and returning the form below or calling 1-877-742-5864.

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Resolution #7

Resolution on the death of Thomas
S. Durant, M.D.

**Councillor Sullivan and entire
membership**

In City Council November 5, 2001

ORDER ADOPTED