

# **James L. Holly, M.D.**

## **Northwestern State University and the Long Purple Line**

**By James L. Holly, MD**

**Your Life Your Health**

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In May, 1965, Carolyn Ann Bellue and James Larry Holly graduated from Northwestern State College (NSC) in Natchitoches, Louisiana, which became Northwestern State University (NSU) in 1970. At NSC, Carolyn was a Purple Jacket, a women's honor society that serves as the official hostess group for NSU. Founded in 1927, the Purple Jackets was the first honor club established at NSC. Adorned in purple and white, colors depicting loyalty, the club is limited to thirty-one active members. At the Purple Jacket "calling", women students, who have demonstrated good scholarship, good character, and a spirit of cooperation and unselfishness in serving, are chosen as new members.

On January 11, 2016, Dr. Holly received the following letter from Dr. Jim Henderson, NSU President, which stated:

"NSU established the Long Purple Line in 1990 to provide recognition and appreciation to former NSU students whose career accomplishments or service to their fellow man have enhanced the reputation of NSU. It is my pleasure to inform you that you have been selected for this most prestigious honor...The University's objective is to make the selection for the Long Purple Line the most prominent honor presented by NSU to its alumni. To date only 115 people out of more than 75,000 alumni have been selected for this recognition."

On February, 29, 2016, the University issued the following press release:

"Holly, a 1965 graduate of Northwestern, is founder and chief executive officer of Southeast Texas Medical Associates. He is a graduate of the University of Texas Medical School in San Antonio, where he is an adjunct professor of Family and Community Medicine. Holly is an associate clinical professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at Texas A&M College of Medicine.

"Holly received the 2015 inaugural National Patient-Centered Medical Home Practice Award from the Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative and the 2012 National HIMSS Physician IT Leadership Award.

"Last year, on the occasion of their 50th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of their graduation from Northwestern State, Holly surprised his wife, Carolyn Bellue Holly, at the NSU Golden Jubilee luncheon by announcing the establishment of Carolyn Bellue Holly Distinguished Professorship in Teaching and Learning. In addition to the Distinguished Professorship endowment, the Hollys have

honored their mothers with the Marie Cobb Bellue Scholarship in Teaching and Learning and the Irene Woodruff Holly Scholarship in Health Care Education.

“The Hollys have advanced medical education at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, making financial contributions to the school to establish: The Dr. and Mrs. James L. Holly Distinguished Chair of Patient-Centered Medical Home; The Wirt Everett Bellue, Sr. and William Richmond Holly, Sr. Distinguished Annual Lectureship in Patient-Centered Medical Home; The Veritas Program for the mentoring of the next generations of medical students; The President’s Development Council; The Danny Duke Annual Music and Medicine Lecture at the Center of Medical Humanities & Ethics and the Endowment of the Primary Care Institute for promoting primary care in the United States

“Larry and Carolyn Holly have also received numerous honors at the Health Science Center including the Dr. And Mrs. James L. Holly University Auditorium and membership on The University of Texas Chancellors Council. In 2012, James Holly was named the 2012 Distinguished Alumni of the School of Medicine.

“Under Holly’s leadership, Southeast Texas Medical Associates has become a leader in healthcare informatics, winning numerous awards in the field. “

### **Carolyn and Larry’s History with NSU**

NSU was founded in 1884 as the Louisiana State Normal School. In 1918, Holly’s paternal grandmother, Mrs. Ilda Garnett Simpson Holly, completed a two-year education certificate from the Normal School She then taught school in a one-room school house built by her husband and which was attached to their home in Pineville, Louisiana. She was a remarkable person and would be a worthy member of both the Purple Jackets and of the Long Purple Line, like thousands more like her.

My personal history with NSU began in September, 1949 when my brother and I were enrolled in the second and third grades at the Laboratory Elementary School on NSC’s campus. The next year, East Natchitoches Elementary opened and I began the third grade there. In the sixth grade in 1954, I attended my first symphony concert at Northwestern. Dr. Joseph Carlucci was the conductor. Twenty-five years later, in 1975, my wife and I attended our first concert in our new home of Beaumont, Texas, only to discover, with delight, that the conductor of the Beaumont Symphony was Dr. Joseph Carlucci.

### **Northwestern, Natchitoches High and the Science Fair**

In 1956, I entered the eighth grade at Natchitoches High School which was on the NSC campus. In that year, a teacher told me that I would never be a leader and that I would spend my life following others. In 1958, my closest friend, who was to be the Valedictorian of our class, was entering the science fair at Northwestern. I decided to do the same so we could spend time together. He prepared an outstanding display and I didn’t. As the judges approached me on “judgment day,” I realized how embarrassing this was going to be. The fun was over and the Piper was about to claim his due.

My project was a fruit juice can with a two inch copper tube soldered into the side, a Bunsen burner, a pin wheel and water, nothing else. As the judges stepped in front of me, I remembered the formula for rotary horsepower, and proceed to present my “steam turbine” which had a measurable horsepower of 0.0013. That afternoon as we set in the awards ceremony in the Northwestern Fine Arts Auditorium, my very deserving and brilliant friend was passed over and I received an “honorable mention.” This was

my first recognition that life is often not fair. That same spontaneity would be present four years later when I met my future wife in a speech class at Northwestern.

After graduating from NHS in May, 1961, I entered Texas A&M University, then Texas A&M College, to study pre-veterinary medicine. I was a good student but In October, 1961, I received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and thought that I would become a minister, so in June, 1962, I started summer school at NSC.

### **Where and how I Carolyn Bellue at Northwestern State University September, 1962**

At registration in the fall of 1962, Dr. Beinvenu asked me why I was "running" away from science? I had been in advanced science and math at A&M and had made "As" In 1967, after completing an undergraduate degree in history and philosophy (1965), marrying (1965), teaching school (1965-1966) and doing a master degree in history at Baylor (1966-1967), I returned to science and medical school.

But, I am ahead of my story. Flashback to September, 1962, I was enrolled in a speech class with Mr. Graham as the teacher. In October (I was 18 years old), we were assigned a speech with a visual aid. Knowing there were eight students ahead of me in the alphabet, and also knowing that Mr. Graham could not get through eight speeches in one hour, I attended class unprepared. That was not unusual for me, but in this case I made a strategic mistake by not remembering the assignment was a speech with a visual aid.

In case it is not clear, a visual aid is something you can see. When Mr. Graham "saw that I had nothing that he could see," he knew that I was not prepared. Because he and I had a love/hate relationship -- I loved him and he hated me, he skipped eight students and called on me.

Well, the die was cast and I was about to die. The choice was "nothing" or "something." At the moment, with my future wife sitting in the class, but we had not yet met, and with "nothing" meaning a grade of "zero," I chose "something," and stood up. Mr. Graham straightened up and looked quizzically, as if to say, " He has no visual aid, what is he going to do?" At that moment, neither he nor I knew the answer.

As I walked to the front of the class, I cast about desperately for a visual aid, which at the least had to be visible. The only thing I saw was a piece of chalk but we specifically could not use the blackboard. Nevertheless, I picked up the chalk and turned to face the class. Mr. Graham had his hand up to say I could not use the blackboard, but before he could say anything, I took three bold steps forward, tossed the chalk into the air, and watched it crumble to the floor. I had my visual aid, now I just needed a speech.

But the end of the story will have to wait until next week's column.