

# THE DOCTORS Daly

Four generations of Dalys have received their medical education at Upstate Medical University.

BY RENÉE GEARHART LEVY

Every now and again, Dennis Daly, MD '83, will encounter an elderly patient in his Camillus, New York, family practice office who comments on his name.

"You know, I had a doctor Dr. Dennis Daly when I was child," the patient will say. "In fact, I think he delivered me."

"I've heard stories about how my grandfather would come out in a horse drawn carriage and when he delivered a baby he would end up having to spend the night," says Dr. Daly.

In fact, Daly was named after his grandfather, Dennis Daly, MD 1901, who practiced in Ellenberg Depot in northern New York for more than 40 years.

The first Dr. Daly was the son of an Irish immigrant farmer, who originally became a school teacher until he was urged to go on and become a physician. He graduated from the Syracuse College of Medicine and went on to care for the residents of tiny Ellenberg until he died from a heart attack while caring for a patient.

While Daly never knew his grandfather, he was more influenced by the career of his own father—the second Dr. Daly.

Roger G. Daly, MD '55, was not admitted to the College of Medicine the first time he applied

and spent a year at the Syracuse University College of Law. Still passionate about wanting to become a doctor, he reapplied, and ultimately enrolled.

Dr. Roger Daly was a solo family practitioner in Marcellus, New York, for 15 years, a Norman Rockwell-type physician who cared for generations of families 24/7 from both his office and his home, as willing to splint the broken wing of a bird brought to him by a child as the child's own arm.

Dennis says his father never tried to influence him to pursue medicine, but a childhood of observation was influence enough.

"Not being part of a big group, my dad was pretty much on duty seven days a week," he recalls. "He had a little examining room set up at home at one of our side doors so if someone was sick on the weekend he could have them come to the house. He also made house calls and I'd often come along for the ride. Sometimes he'd have me come inside and meet the family."

Daly recalls his father receiving payment for one such visit with sheep manure, another time with a Christmas tree. "It was a small town and I could see how people respected him, relied on him, and appreciated what he did."

By the time Daly was applying to medical school, his father was retired and living in Las Vegas and exerted no influence on his son's path. Although Daly had his choice of schools, he says he was attracted to Upstate for its strong reputation in the clinical training of physicians.

After graduating from the College of Medicine in 1983, completing his family practice residency at St. Joseph Health Center, and serving four years with the National Health Service in Northeast Florida, Daly was recruited to join the practice of Dr. Paul Palmer, a long-time family physician in Camillus who was looking to retire.

As Palmer and his partner did retire, the group expanded and now has two nurse practitioners and five physicians, all locally raised. Despite the group setting, Daly tries to emulate his father's practice as much as possible.

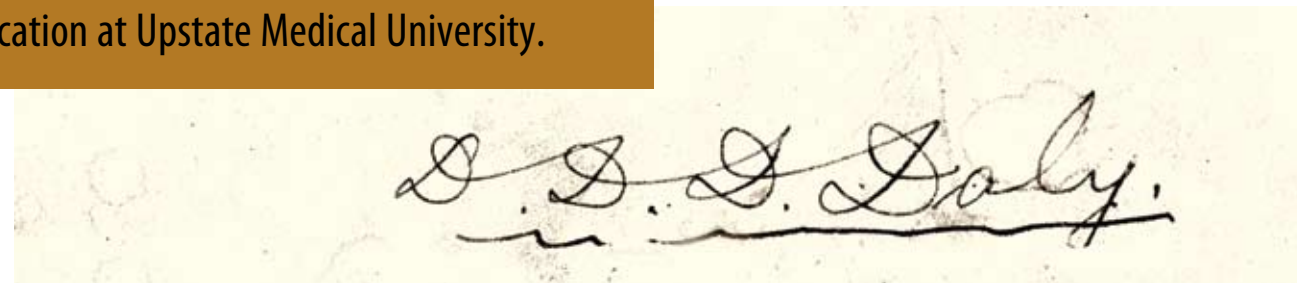
"With family practice there's the potential for great continuity and appreciation," he says. "You get to know your patients and families personally and to understand where they're coming from and what their priorities are in life. If you show a lot of compassion, dedication, and caring to the patient and whatever their problems might be, I think you receive that back. That's pretty rewarding. If I won the lottery, nothing would change."

That value system has influenced yet another generation. Ian Daly '11, Dennis's son, enrolled at the Upstate College of Medicine last fall and now is in his second year.

"Growing up, I used to tell my father I wanted to be a scientist," Ian recalls. "My dad would say, 'Well I'm a scientist.' But I was picturing something more along the lines of beakers and bubbling test tubes."

Ian entered St. Michaels College in Vermont as an engineering major, but was nagged by the thought that he wanted a career that was more than just a 9-to-5 job. By now he'd had the experience of shadowing his father and his father's partners and realized there was both a science and an art to medicine, as well as very clear rewards.

Originally thinking he wanted to attend medical school at the University of Vermont or University of Rochester, Ian changed his mind after making his campus visits. "The atmosphere at Upstate felt more collegial. People were less competitive and it seemed more like a family," he says. He was initially wait-



Dennis Daly, MD '83, and son Ian Daly '11

listed at Upstate. "Once I got the news that I'd been accepted, I knew that's where I was going," he says.

Despite his fourth-generation legacy status, Ian says his father never tried to talk him into attending medical school. "He didn't have to. Because I grew up with it, I have an understanding of what the life of a doctor is," says Ian, who plans to pursue primary care and would love nothing more than to become an old-fashioned small-town doctor.

Like his father, grandfather, and great grandfather before him, Ian is less interested in a "good paying profession" than in being a doctor around the clock, day in and day out. The family legacy is only motivation to work hard and do well.

"I want to be as smart as my dad," he says. "I don't know if I can ever be that good." ■



Roger Daly, MD '55



The Class of 1901 in the Anatomy Lab.