



## Dr. DeWitt T. Dabback

June 23, 1925 - November 27, 2015

Dr. DeWitt Talmage Dabback, who spent 44 years as a beloved family physician caring for the Spring-Ford community, died on Friday in Phoenixville. He was 90.

Dr. Dabback lived an extraordinary life. He was born in 1925 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, to David G. and Ruth (Haws) Dabback. His father was a minister who immigrated to the United States in 1896 from what is now modern-day Turkey.

Dr. Dabback attended Spring City High School and at the age of 17 enlisted in the United States Army. During training, he studied engineering at City College of New York for one year before deploying overseas. He served in the infantry in World War II in Belgium, England, France, and Germany and fought at the Battle of the Bulge and the Rhineland. Upon completion of his service, he chose to study medicine, enrolling first at Ursinus College in Collegeville, and then earning his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia.

While at Ursinus, Dr. Dabback volunteered to drive a young woman from Spring City to and from campus. This strong, whip-smart, charming young lady, Ruth Stewart, would become his partner in life, marrying him in July 1949 while he was in medical school. He and "Ruthie" were married for 62 years,

until her death in 2011.

After he graduated from Jefferson in 1952, Dr. Dabback turned down a prestigious surgical residency to pursue family medicine, completing an internship at Methodist Episcopal Hospital in Philadelphia and a residency at Phoenixville Hospital. He then joined a family practice in Royersford, which he later took over; Mrs. Dabback ran the office.

He also served as president of the medical staff at Phoenixville Hospital and was designated a charter fellow of the American Academy of Physicians in 1972. He also served as a school physician for the Spring-Ford School District, the Charles Johnson Home (now Parkhouse Nursing and Rehabilitation Center) and for various other companies in the Spring-Ford area.

Dr. Dabback is remembered by many patients for his empathetic bedside manner. One patient remembered that he was the kind of doctor "who touched my hand, looked right at me, and really listened to me."

A central part of his practice was obstetrics and he delivered almost 1,000 babies. He was also well known for his sense of humor both inside the hospital and out. In one patient note, he remarked: "Patient reports he feels like 'a million bucks'. Will charge accordingly."

His son John recalls Dr. Dabback taking him on hospital rounds when he was in second grade: "I got to see people who were unhappy, tired, and depressed. After a minute or two being with my dad they were happy, lively, and thrilled. He didn't do anything or say anything special. He just listened. He really cared. He wanted to know their story. He was a good doctor, but the extraordinary part was that he came 'to heal the broken hearted' (Luke 4:18)."

Dr. Dabback was also heavily involved in his community. He was an active member of St. James Lutheran Church in Limerick, where he sang in the choir for almost 45 years, taught adult Sunday School, and served on the Call Committee. He was also President of the Council at Grace Lutheran Church in Royersford and served on the Royersford Planning Commission.

He and Mrs. Dabback loved to travel and filled their house with treasures from their adventures. During his free time he could be found mowing the grass and climbing trees to cut down branches. He enjoyed reading. He loved opera and classical music and could break out in song at any moment, clapping his hands and stamping his feet. He was a storyteller-occasionally telling the same story more than once. He had a distinctive style only he could have pulled off-patchwork, brightly colored pants, and bow ties were fashion staples. He and Ruthie were champions of progressive causes well before they became mainstream.

A major focus of family life in the summer was the pool, which Dr. Dabback had installed for hydrotherapy for Ruthie even though he couldn't swim. On one occasion, after having taken swimming lessons during a vacation, he decided to show off to his neighbors at a pool party. Saying, "Hey, I want to show you something," he dove into the pool and sank immediately to the bottom. After an uncomfortable length of time, someone exclaimed "Doc's in trouble!" and dove in to haul him out, gasping for air. It turns out he had taken lessons in a salt-water pool and had not anticipated the results of the loss of the additional buoyancy.

His large family was perhaps his greatest life's work. He died peacefully at Phoenixville Hospital surrounded by loved ones. He is survived by two daughters: Katherine, wife of Ernest Faust, of Royersford and Patricia, wife of Frederick Kaier, of Phoenixville; two sons: John, husband of Cynthia Dabback,

of Pottstown and Peter, husband of DorÃ© Dabback, of Phoenixville; nine grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. One of six children, he is also survived by his devoted sister Ruth Ann. He will be missed by dozens of other family members and friends, including the family dog, Bowser.

The community is invited to attend his funeral service at St. James Lutheran Church, 93 Kugler Road, Limerick, PA 19468, on Saturday, December 5, 2015, at 11:00 a.m. with Bobbie Hoffman officiating. Interment will follow in the Limerick Garden of Memories. Friends will be received from 9:00-11:00 a.m. Saturday at the Church. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made in DeWitt's name to the Dr. DeWitt Dabback Pastoral Care Fund at St. James Lutheran Church. Condolences may be offered online at [www.RoyersfordFuneralHome.com](http://www.RoyersfordFuneralHome.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Limerick Garden of Memories

44 Arcadia Drive  
Limerick, PA 19468

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 5. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. James Lutheran Church  
93 Kugler Road  
Royersford, PA 19468

## Funeral Ceremony

DEC 5. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. James Lutheran Church  
93 Kugler Road  
Royersford, PA 19468

# Tribute Wall

J(

“ My parents moved to Spring City at Brownback's when I was three. My Dad was the minister there and I already had two sister siblings. I was the oldest. Dr. Dabback became our family physician and actually delivered my three sibling brothers. He took great care of our family for thirteen years until we moved to Connecticut. He even made house calls. I am thankful for the video that was posted along with words describing his life. It gave me a greater insight into the man as well as the doctor. My sympathy and prayers to the family at this time.

*Jessica Caruso neé Firme*

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**Jessica Caruso (Firme)** - December 19, 2015 at 08:32 AM

MS

“ If you lived in Royersford within the last 50 years you could not help about crossing paths with Dr. Dabback, who was our family doctor. This man was more than a doctor he was more like a member of the family. I think he was the last Doctor in town who made house calls. I rarely remember seen him drive his car. He walked a bit around town and we would see him on a daily basis walk past our house on Church Street.

*If you came across him and if you were a patient he would call you by name.*

*That's kind of person he was. Our condolences to the Dabback family.*

*Michael Sites (and from all the Sites family)*

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**Michael Sites** - December 08, 2015 at 11:55 AM

FB

“ Got news tonight that broke my heart.. I worked at National Penn for four years where I met Dr. Dabback and he instantly became one of my favorite customers. What a wise, warm-hearted man. He ALWAYS knew how to get me to crack a smile even on some of my gloomiest days. What a truly wonderful man, inside & out. I remember he even convinced me to go on a little "lunch date" one day & we went down to the Springford Diner.. where I took my only picture of him. Reading his obituary captured his great sense of humor.. "In one patient note, he remarked: "Patient reports he feels like 'a million bucks'. Will charge accordingly." - God love him! My thoughts & prayers to the family at this difficult time. Rest easy Dr. DeWitt Talmage Dabback. I am sure your Ruthie is delighted to have you reunited with her.



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**Faith Marie Blanchard** - December 07, 2015 at 09:55 PM

JU

“ My heart is sad as I realized Kathy, that you and your family have lost such a joy in your life. As your family shared, I was touched to admiration and tears of a sense of lost-not even having ever but seen your Dad in passing, but in hearing the spontaneity of his love and humor and deep love and respect he had for his sons, daughters, spouses, grandchildren, and nieces and nephews. I understand now where your ready smile comes from Kathy and the gentleness in your spirit. May the compassion and love your Dad showed for you all and those strangers on earth he was an angel to, be showed back to you by the angels round about us as you continue your journey here on earth. Thanks so much for sharing his homecoming and for all of you who opened your hearts to share, and inspire us to live the calling God has for each of us in our own way. Love you so much Kathy. God comfort you in your sadness.  
Juanita

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**Juanita** - December 05, 2015 at 03:20 PM



“ 1 file added to the album VIDEO TRIBUTES



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**Campbell-Ennis-Klotzbach Funeral Home** - December 03, 2015 at 12:12 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. DeWitt T. Dabback.



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December 02, 2015 at 06:31 AM

TS

“ We knew Dewitt only slightly thru his grandson Alex, but that was enough to appreciate that he was a decent and good man. The extensive community work he did outlined in his obituary attests to that. Our sympathy and prayers go out to Alex and his family. Tess & Jose Sandoval, Pasadena CA

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**Tess & Jose Sandoval** - December 01, 2015 at 04:08 PM

KY

“ Dr. Dabback was our family doctor for many, many years, from my Grandmother down to all us kids. He was always cheerful and had a smile on his face. We know he will be missed by many, you cannot put a price on his contribution to this community. We know he will be missed by many. Our warmest wishes to his family from the Yenchick family. Kay, Ray & Lee Yenchick

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**Kay Yenchick** - December 01, 2015 at 10:01 AM

DC

“ So sorry Whitney. Your grandpa was an awesome man. I remember going to his house swimming with you. What a great guy.  
-Dara Colledge

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**Dara colledge** - December 01, 2015 at 05:28 AM

BN

“ To Kathy & Family,  
I am so sorry to hear of your father's passing. Like so many, I have wonderful memories of him as both our family doctor and of him at home as 'your Dad'. I remember when I first learned the "HMO & Medical insurances were changing" & I unwillingly had to accept that the days of the 'family country doctor' whom you knew inside and outside of the office were quickly coming to an end. I have never had another doctor that rose to the same level as your Dad both medically and with the ability he had to listen, put you at ease, emotionally support you and also inject humor. Dr. Dabback was truly a very special man & will be sadly missed. My memories of him will remain with me and my family, always.

Sincerely,  
Brenda (Yergey) Neafcy

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**Brenda Neafcy** - December 01, 2015 at 05:22 AM

SM

“ Dr Dabback was our family doctor when I was growing up. He encouraged me in my nursing career and even told me I should have gone to medical school! He was the ultimate role model as a family physician and a true healer! You will be missed.

Sandy Shaffer Minnick, CRNP

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**Sandy Minnick** - November 30, 2015 at 09:38 PM

DN

“ I am deeply saddened by learning of the loss of this most wonderful caring man. He was always so funny and jovial yet kind and caring. He delivered my youngest son in Jan. 1968. He came into the labor room and said "your baby is going to be a breech birth. Do u know what that means"? I replied " yes I do, feet first". Away we went to delivery. He made the entire experience a joy for me. Every office visit was a nice place to be with a very kind, caring man who made you feel better before you even received your medication or filled prescription.. I will miss him. I'm glad he had a nice long life and he will be in Heaven with Ruthie. God rest your soul my doctor, my friend.



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**dottie noble** - November 30, 2015 at 09:00 PM

RS

“ To Family and Friends,  
We knew and loved DeWitt as a family doctor for many years, and a church member, and choir... His generosity and great faith was an inspiration.  
We smile when we have so many memories.  
My husband and I married and my husband was 47 years old. That did not deter him from sitting us down and giving us the counseling he gave to all young married couples. We laughed and he filled us with joy.  
A caring and compassionate person. Will always hold a special part of hearts and memories.  
Blessings,  
Bob and Diane Shotwell

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**R & D Shotwell** - November 30, 2015 at 01:11 PM



“ 1 file added to the album VIDEO TRIBUTES



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**Campbell-Ennis-Klotzbach Funeral Home** - November 30, 2015 at 12:46 PM

BH

“ *Cathy and John, and family,  
I'm sorry to learn of your loss. Aaron always enjoyed hanging at  
their house in the pool with Chris. What a wonderful life he lived. So  
many blessings... -Benita Holden*

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**Benita Holden** - November 30, 2015 at 10:30 AM

KG

“ Pete, Pat, Kathy and John: our thoughts and prayers are with you. I have so many wonderful memories of your Dad. Living next door to DeWitt for over 50 years was always comforting. Every Wednesday you would surely find him mowing the lawn in his safari hat, and clearing the lawn of every twig and leaf. Those times when I would find him up on the roof chasing leaves, or on a ladder trimming branches on the Mulberry Tree in recent years gave me a fright. One day I caught him on the roof. I asked, "DeWitt, what are you doing up there? " He'd say, "I'm cleaning leaves off the roof." ( note there were maybe 10 leaves). " But DeWitt, you're 80 years old. Get down from there, the wind will blow those leaves off." "But I can get them off now." Eventually he got down because he knew I wasn't going home until he did. I was relieved the other week to look up to see John on the roof and DeWitt being the armchair director of the operation.  
De Witt I will always love you, it's Ruthie's turn to chase you off the roof now.

*Kathy Mauger Grispon*

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**Kathy Mauger Grispon** - November 30, 2015 at 10:14 AM

DC

“ He will be surely be miss,he was a wonderful Doctor

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**Dolores (BLISS) Carl** - November 30, 2015 at 10:06 AM

DW

“ I had him as my dr when I was little I rember him when his office was on 4th ave Royersford he was a good dr he took care of my three kids to everyone I go past his office I rember him np matter what they make that building to be it well always be his office rest in peace from the Burnett family

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**debra burnett weber** - November 30, 2015 at 06:09 AM

DP

“ *Our thoughts and Prayers are with you. No pain can compare with the loss of a loved one, but no love can compare with the love of God the Father. Our prayers are that He will comfort the family at this time and surround you with the ones that love you most. It was God's time for him to come home. He finished his work here, it is now his time to be with and praise God for the wonderful life he blessed him with, his family and his friends.*



*One day you to will be with him, look forward to the blessed time with hope when we all shall be together again, no more to part.*

*God's blessings to the family,  
Pete and Dottie Ponton*

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**Dorothy Ponton** - November 30, 2015 at 05:56 AM

GM

“ *So sorry to hear the news of Dr. Dabback's passing. We will remember him always as a gentle, witty, and humorous man. We truly enjoyed knowing him while our family worshipped at St James. Our deepest sympathy to all who loved him.*

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**Gail and Scott Mickalonis** - November 29, 2015 at 08:13 PM

DP

“ What can one say about a truly lovely, gentle soul, who thought about others, looked after his lovely wife with no complaint and just blessed everyone with his wit and just his endearing self. Alan and I will miss those visits to Pottstown where "Our Room" was always there for us, where he made us so welcome, treated us like family. He is an inspiration to all of us on a life well lived. Deewitt and Ruth's house seemed to be the focal point and we shall miss being part of those gatherings where everyone was cherished. We will miss him there is no doubt about that but all those lovely memories live on in our hearts. Our condolences go out to all the family at this very sad time.

*With our love and sympathy, Denise and Alan. xxx*

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**Denise & Alan Pitts** - November 29, 2015 at 06:28 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. DeWitt T. Dabback.



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November 29, 2015 at 05:50 PM