A LIFE OF SERVICE

HAVING ENJOYED A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN MEDICINE THAT HAS SPANNED MORE THAN 46 YEARS, DR. T. J. “TED” GLENN CONTINUES TO LIVE IN THE MOMENT AND SERVE JESUS BY HELPING OTHERS.

By: [ANA CLARISSA RODRIGUEZ]  Photography: [ROBIN JERSTAD]

DR. T. J. “TED” GLENN, 86, dedicated five decades of his life to aiding his community and spreading the teachings of Jesus Christ and his rendition of unconditional “agape love.” Glenn grew up in the sleepy town of Alto, Texas. He lived in a quiet community under the same roof with his parents, grandmother and three siblings. His mother and father were his primary mentors who raised him to have strong religious beliefs. He describes his parents as “God-fearing people” who believed in the golden rule: treating others as you would like to be treated. This is a motto he continues to practice in his everyday life.

As a young boy, Glenn accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. He was raised in a Methodist household; however, his father was a freemason who would worship with the family only on special occasions.

“Between the ages of 10 and 16, I had recurrent thoughts of becoming a Christian minister,” Glenn said. “Becoming a doctor was actually my second choice. When I failed to receive my ‘calling from God’ to become a minister, I decided to pursue a career as a doctor to try and serve Jesus by aiding others.”

After much thought, Glenn made the tough decision to enlist in the U.S. Navy at age 17. “My family was underprivileged. We didn’t even have money for medical care. I had no vaccinations and had never been to the dentist prior to joining the Navy. My decision to enlist seemed like the best possible solution for me to serve the country, travel and earn an education.”

At 18, Glenn became a hospital corpsman, helping doctors and nurses treat sick and injured sailors and Marines at the naval hospital of Millington, Tenn. “This is where my love of medicine came into effect,” Glenn said. “I had found a way to help others besides becoming a minister.”

Three years later, Glenn was honorably discharged from the Navy. He enrolled at Sam Houston State University, where he studied premedicine. He received his M.D. from UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas in 1955. One year later, Glenn completed an internship at St. Paul University Hospital, passed the family practice boards and worked as a family practice board specialist for several years.

“I have been practicing medicine for over 46 years,” Glenn said. “I learned a great deal from every position I’ve held over the years. My most memorable career years were when I opened my own practice for family health,
child and adult psychiatry in Missouri because I was able to integrate all of my skill sets and become a more knowledgeable physician."

However, Glenn knew his learning experience was far from finished. "I was thirsty for knowledge," Glenn said. "So I did what any person would do and went back to school."

In 1970, Glenn attended graduate school part-time at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, where he earned an M.A. in psychology. He then completed his second and third year of residency at the Menninger School of Psychiatry from 1970 to 1973. To date, Glenn is an active board-certified child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist. He retired from family practice 10 years ago in 2003.

"I enjoyed working in the medical field, but in recent years, I have found a greater happiness spending my days at the Independence Hill Retirement Resort Community with my wife, Anna Marie Glenn," Glenn said. Glenn and his wife have three married children with families of their own. They have been married for 62 years and have participated in two Independence Hill wedding vow renewal ceremonies, most recently this past February on Valentine’s Day.

"We are both enthusiastic volunteers who participate in many activities at Independence Hill," Glenn explained. "I am an avid member of the Independence Hill Monthly Book Review, as well as the Hill Topper Chorus, and my wife teaches sitter size fitness classes and works in the country store."

Glenn and his wife have been residents at Independence Hill for the past 11 years. "In our free time, we sponsor a resident’s ‘Agape Love Award,’" Glenn added. The “Agape Love Award” was created for Independence Hill residents to nominate and recognize a resident or staff member who practices unselfish and unconditional caring for another person: agape love.

"Agape love is a part of our witness for our spiritual belief system," Glenn said. "We created the award to inspire people to live by the golden rule. We feel so blessed to have the award at Independence Hill and encourage all residents to participate."

Glenn has two ultimate life goals for himself. No. 1 is to live in the moment, and No. 2 is to personify Jesus Christ’s Bible teachings by spreading agape love to all who are willing to accept. "I am an honest man," Glenn said. "I learn from the past and look forward to my future. I live in the triangle of being truthful, forgiving and ‘agape’ loving, and I plan to do so for a very long time."