

Eck Family to be Honored by SWOSU College of Pharmacy

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Members of the Eck family will be honored with the first-ever College of Pharmacy Heritage Award at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford during the 75th Anniversary Celebration Dinner this Saturday, April 26, at the Pioneer Cellular Event Center on the Weatherford campus.

The first-ever Southwestern Oklahoma State University College of Pharmacy Heritage Award will be presented at the 75th Anniversary Celebration Dinner this Saturday, April 26, at the Pioneer Cellular Event Center on the Weatherford campus.

Members of the Eck Family receiving the honor, all SWOSU pharmacy graduates, are Kenneth Eck (1950), father; Dana "Biff" (1978), son; Mark (1974), son; Sandi (1974), daughter-in-law, wife of Mark; and Valarie (1992), daughter-in-law, wife of Biff.

The Heritage Award recognizes a family with at least two generations of SWOSU pharmacy graduates who have demonstrated a commitment to the university, College of Pharmacy and the pharmacy profession. The Eck Family has a long history of service.

Kenneth Eck began the Eck family pharmacy legacy soon after his graduation from SWOSU when he became part owner of his hometown store in Healdton, eventually becoming full owner and naming it Eck Drug. He also served on the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy (OSBP), Pharmacy Providers of Oklahoma (PPOK) and the Oklahoma Pharmacists Association (OPhA), serving as president in 1990.

In 1974, Kenneth's second son, Mark, and wife Sandi, moved home to Healdton and soon Mark became a partner at Eck Drug. Sandi worked at the Seventh-Day Adventist Hospital, then Healdton Hospital and worked days off at Brown Drug in Waurika and Reavis Pharmacy in Ardmore. Eventually, Sandi began working full time with Kenneth and Mark.

After Kenneth retired in 1987, Mark and Sandi became sole owners. Mark managed the pharmacy and worked with Sandi until he had a health issue. Sandi managed the pharmacy and ran the store until it was sold in 2012. Serving the profession was also important to Mark and Sandi. Mark served on the OSBP, PPOK (charter member) and OPhA, serving as president in 1985. Sandi served on the PPOK and OPhA, serving as president in 1999. Additionally, Mark served on the Southwestern Pharmacy Alumni Foundation for 25 years.

Kenneth's youngest son, Dana "Biff", joined the family business in 1978. Biff bought City Drug in Waurika, hometown of his wife Valarie, and opened Eck Drug & Gift in 1985. A few years later, Valarie returned to Weatherford and completed her pharmacy degree, becoming the fifth pharmacist in the Eck family. Valarie later became the chief pharmacist at the VA in Lawton. Biff and Valarie were also members of the OPhA, with Valarie being named OPhA's Young Pharmacist of the Year in 1998.

The Eck Family is known as the only family in America with three living recipients of the national Bowl of Hygeia Award, which recognizes one pharmacist per state each year for excellence in community service. Kenneth received the award in 1984, Mark in 1988 and Biff in 2000. In addition to being actively involved in the pharmacy profession, each has also served in numerous capacities in their communities.

“The College of Pharmacy is extremely proud to recognize the Eck family members and to claim them as graduates of our pharmacy college,” said Pharmacy Alumni & Development Director Patti Harper.

In conjunction with the annual Heritage Award, a Texas White bud tree has been planted in the new College of Pharmacy 75th Anniversary Garden area on the SWOSU campus where the name of the honored family will be displayed each year. The dedication of the Heritage tree will take place on Sunday, April 27, during the 75th Anniversary Celebration Closing Ceremony.