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# Giving thanks for a special lifesaving doctor

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During this year's Thanksgiving holiday there is no way that I will forget to thank God for a West Chester internist who was a pioneer in the treatment of Lyme disease and a life saver for my family.

Dr. Bernard Steven Burke of Chester Springs died on Nov. 16. Dr. Burke graduated from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and practiced medicine in Chester County for the last 30 years.

Countless chronically ill patients, many of them difficult cases who came to him after having visited befuddled specialist after specialist, owe significant progress or even cure to his medical art.

Thus, Dr. Burke leaves behind not only his immediate family — wife, children and stepchildren — but also a large number of grateful and saddened patients who entrusted their lives to this resourceful doctor and extraordinarily caring man.

They know for a fact that West Chester just lost one of its most knowledgeable practitioners in treating tick-borne diseases.

It may be that the importance of unpretentious practitioners like Bernard Steven Burke will only be fully understood in years to come.

But there are hints of recognition.

The National Institute of Health recently held a State of the Science Conference on these diseases in Washington, mandated by Congress.

At that conference it was finally just understood that chronic forms of tick-borne diseases exist, meaning that these diseases (such as Lyme, Babesia, Bartonella and others) can fester in patients for years and years, wreaking havoc on our immune systems and destroying the futures of young children and people in the prime of their lives,

like my wife and children.

Dr. Burke was part of a small but growing cadre of physicians who recognize the potent nature of these diseases and their potential devastating longterm effects.

He took pains and time to treat his patients with the full arsenal of his medical knowledge.

The achievements of Dr. Burke will now be measured in heaven, no doubt more fairly and accurately than I ever could.

But I know that this doc gave it his all here on Earth. I am a pastor in a Lutheran Church in Montgomery County.

When my wife, whom I only knew as joyful bundle of energy and a smart independent business consultant to boot, became tired, depressed and brain foggy, I knew something was seriously wrong with her.

The problem was that nobody could figure out what it was, even as additional serious symptoms kept emerging.

To make a long story short: Dr. Burke brought her back, and our children, on a path to health.

I am a minister in my daily life. People expect me to listen to their problems and pray for them.

Dr. Burke, on top of his considerable professional credentials, was the medical equivalent of a pastor: he always took the time to listen and understand his patients, explaining very complex phenomena in common terms.

For that, for his devotion to my family and many other patients and for his medical skill I will be forever grateful.

Thank you, Dr. Burke!

Pastor Andreas Wagner is the minister at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in North Wales.

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