

Carl C. Lau

Obituary



February 7, 1920 - May 5, 2016

Dr. Carl C. Lau, affectionately known as Doc, passed in his sleep on May 5, 2016 at his Silver Lake home of nearly 60 years in Los Angeles. He practiced dentistry for over 60 years mostly in downtown Los Angeles, other than for a two-year stint in the mid 1950s as a Major in the U.S. Army where he was in charge of the Army Dental Clinic in Erlangen, Germany.

As an eight-year-old growing up in Hawaii, Carl had a younger sister, who had a serious orthopaedic condition that was successfully treated at [Shriners Hospitals for Children](#). That act of kindness and generosity by the Shriners made an indelible impression on him.

As a teen, Carl studied sugar technology at the University of Hawaii until a fateful visit to one of his professors, who had just returned from a visit to a dentist. The professor said there was no future in the sugar industry - low wages and little chance of advancement - and "Lau, you should become a dentist!" He took that to heart and was accepted to two dental schools - Northwestern and USC - and quickly decided that the warmth of southern California beat the icy winter of the Midwest.

It was while at USC that Carl met Goldie Siu in 1941. After receiving his D.D.S. in 1943, they married in 1944. In the early years Carl worked hard to establish his dental practice while Goldie was the quintessential homemaker and mother of three sons, but also a part-time student at USC where she earned a BA in Sociology.

Times and prejudices were different in those days. The effects of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 lingered into the mid 1900s. Purchasing a home or property in Silver Lake, or starting a dental practice in downtown Los Angeles was unheard of. With astounding determination, acumen and social skills, Carl was able to purchase a home in the late 1940s and some property in the early 1950s that became the family home built in 1957 while he was in Germany. This is the home that Carl and Goldie lived in the rest of their lives. Carl made it possible for future generations of Chinese to be more fairly included in American society and have access to many things we take for granted today. By the same token Carl established a successful dental practice and eventually included his two older sons Carl S. and Calvin.

Professionally, he was president of the Los Angeles Dental Society and trustee to the California Dental Association. He also was chief examiner for the southern section of the California State Board of Dentistry. Early in his career, Carl joined Los Angeles Lodge No. 42, the first Masonic Lodge in Los Angeles. He became Master of his Lodge in 1972 and eventually a Noble in the Al Malaikah Shrine to go full circle with the organization that helped his sister many years ago. Carl was an Eagle Scout and later a scoutmaster. His sons Calvin and Howard also became Eagle Scouts.

Carl had many creative outlets for his boundless energy. He was an extraordinary gardener of tomatoes, avocados, orchids, roses, and earthworms. He was an avid bowler, trout fisherman, 35mm photographer and shooter of 16mm movies when film was the real thing and digital was related to fingers.

Carl and Goldie traveled the world on cruises to six continents and collected many art objects along the way. The Army career led to an affection for German art and objects. Chinese and German objects collected in a lifetime of travels decorated his home and merged cultures for all who visited. He created nested origami boxes up to 42 deep that he gifted to patients, friends, and relatives.

Predeceased are his wife Goldie (2013) and oldest sister Violet Lai (2013). Survivors include all sons Carl S., Calvin, and Howard; all granddaughters Chuen-Yen Lau & Jin-Wah Lau (Howard) and Stephanie Lau & Julie Lau (Calvin); daughter-in-law Sharon (Howard); former daughters-in-law Kimiko (Carl S.), Lucina (Calvin), and Lily (Howard); and two sisters Lai Sin "Sinny" Ching and Marion "Ginny" Siu. Visitation will be held at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale on May 15 (Sunday, 3-7 pm). Services with Masonic and Military recognition will be on May 17 (Tuesday at Wee Kirk O' the Heather, 9:30 am). In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to [Shriners Hospitals for Children](http://www.shriners.org) .

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- See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/latimes/obituary.aspx?n=carl-c-lau&pid=179939781#sthash.kIqTPQxp.dpuf>

Notes:

The **Chinese Exclusion Act** was a US federal law signed by President Chester A. Arthur on May 6, 1882. It was one of the most significant restrictions on free immigration in US history, prohibiting all immigration of Chinese laborers.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was the first law implemented to prevent a specific ethnic group from immigrating to the United States. It was repealed by the Magnuson Act on December 17, 1943.