

Mary Kirkendall's Closing

**Delivered during Memorial Service for Walter M. Kirkendall, M.D.
July 18, 1991
University of Texas Medical School
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I would like to close the memorial service today by thanking the medical school for allowing us this opportunity to gather together and to hear such lovely remembrances of my father.

It is apt that a woman be represented at the podium today for it highlights yet another quality of my father — his ability to adapt. Early in his career, I suspect my father was quite a skeptic of women in medicine. At the latter stage of his tenure, I know with most assuredness that he felt women were making a tremendous contribution in medicine.

I have been struck by how many people have said to me in the last few days have used the word "immortal" to describe my father. Indeed, it appears he had some immortal research, occasional immortal teaching techniques, and clearly immortal ideals. His wife and children know about his "immortal" ways as husband and father.

At my mother's request, I would like to share this poem by an unknown author:

Do not stand at my grave and weep. I am not there. I do not sleep;

*I am thousand winds that blow. I am the diamond glints on snow. I am
the sunlight on ripened grain. I am the gentle autumn rain;*

*When you awaken in the morning's hush, I am the swift uplifting rush of
quiet birds in circling flight. I am the soft star that shines at night;*

Do not stand at my grave and cry. I am not there. I did not die.

Please take a piece of my father with you in your care-giving, in your love of medicine, and in your love of life.

Thank you, and may God bless you.