

Tributes to Gina Anderson¹

Born March 19, 1965, in Palo Alto, California, Gina Anderson died suddenly from an acute pulmonary embolism on January 25, 2011, in Jersey City, New Jersey. A respected physician specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, Gina was dedicated to her patients, to treating the neediest, and to teaching the next generation of physicians. Friends and family gathered online and at memorial gatherings to share memories and bear witness to her life through the following tributes.

Denise James: Gina, A Life of Caring

Gina Anderson, 45, spent her life caring for others—friends and family, colleagues, patients who were among the neediest, and her three cats, Scout, Tex, and Marley. She rescued Marley, her youngest cat, after she saw him being abandoned on the roadside.

Two months ago, she had no idea her time was coming but, over dinner, she said to me, “Promise me that if something happens to me, someone will take care of the cats.” She wanted to make sure that her cats would stay together and not end up in a shelter.

That was typical of Gina—no-nonsense and pragmatic—to plan ahead. She became a doctor for the best reasons, because she wanted to help those most in need. Born in Palo Alto, California, she grew up in Minnesota, where she attended Edina High School. After spending a year in Italy as an exchange student, she entered Harvard University. Upon graduation, she worked at a consulting firm in Seattle before deciding to enroll in the Medical School of Wisconsin in 1996. Four years later, she completed her residency in obstetrics-gynecology at University of Texas Southwestern at Parkland Hospital. She chose Parkland because she wanted to provide care to poor patients who might otherwise be overlooked; at Parkland, half of her patients were indigent or illegally in the United States.

She transferred to the University of Medicine and Dentistry at New Jersey for the same reasons, and she showed the same solicitude for her patients. In my years working with Gina, she always was fighting for what was best for her patients. Many of her patients were Latinos and, over time, her Spanish improved immensely. She came up with detailed plans for them and stayed on top of the academic literature. She often seemed to know more than the specialists did, and she was generous about

From Gina’s Facebook page

“Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.” —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“When things are going well, don't relax, and when they're not, don't panic.” —Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche

“While it may be difficult to change the world, it is always possible to change the way we look at it.” —Mathieu Ricard

“Either you decide to stay in the shallow end of the pool or you go out in the ocean.” —Christopher Reeve

¹ These tributes to Gina Anderson were taken from various authors who wrote statements on her memorial website (gina.anderson.muchloved.com); speakers at Gina’s memorial; and transcribed audience comments at Gina’s memorial service on February 19, 2011 in Newark, NJ. This is the link to [Gina’s 85-slide Pictorial History](#).

mentoring residents and colleagues. I learned a lot from her—Gina wasn't shy about sharing her opinions!

Gina also cared about the environment and would forever harass her colleagues to get off their butts and walk the extra few steps down the hallway to recycle a piece of trash. She had just joined a vegetable co-op in Jersey City and had taken her turn staffing it a few weeks ago.

Gina was so smart and so interested in the world, and she was just on the cusp of a new adventure. She had just accepted a new job recently at the Cambridge Health Alliance in Boston, which serves some of that city's neediest residents.

She was an avid reader of everything from books like *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* to the popular culture of *People* magazine. She liked shopping. She loved going to restaurants, movies, and shows—though we were always intending to go to more. I'll miss walking around Jersey City with her and popping in for a bite at IHOP, Red Lobster, or for one of her trademark margaritas at that Mexican place she liked so much.

When Gina died on January 25, 2011, she left behind a younger brother, Evan Anderson of Edina, Minnesota, her mother, Mary Roberts Scott of Thorp, Washington, and her father Ron Anderson of Wayzata, Minnesota.

She also left behind friends like me. I had a baby recently, and she threw not one, but two, baby showers for me. It feels right to me that Gina was the very first person to meet my daughter. When I learned I was pregnant, she did the first ultrasounds with me. I remember looking at the images with her, and seeing the life growing inside. She was so excited for me. It's impossible to believe that she's gone now. I'll miss her terribly. —Denise

Summer Brown: Helping Students Find their Highest Potential

I first met Gina as a fourth-year medical student. I was terrified of her. As a resident, I came to know her much better, through general clubs and other educational opportunities, and she was a fantastic teacher. She always held everybody to their highest potential.

I moved to New Jersey to complete my fellowship and a couple of days later, found out that Gina moved a few blocks away from me in New Jersey City. So we got to know each other much better as friends and neighbors. While we were both very busy, we found time to share our experiences and learned that we both were fascinated and interested in urban renewal. We then entered the housing market together. At one time, we thought of purchasing condos in the same town.

She was a great friend and a great neighbor. She, in her busy schedule, found time to come to events at our house and to make children's birthday curtains. So, I will really miss her and I think about her every day.

Danny Louis: Picking up Where We Left Off

I was a college friend of Gina's and, over the years, we stayed friends. She actually dated a couple of my roommates. That was about the time I knew she was going to be a doctor because she really needed a lot of patience to date them.

Gina popped in and out of my life over the years. But, as it is with the people who have shared a special time being with you when you're becoming what you will be, it always seemed like we picked up right where we left off. My wife was very fond of Gina; they hit it off immediately when they discovered cat hair on each other's clothes.

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So, Gina was a frequent guest at my house. Gina and I stayed up late talking and drinking wine and, as I often do if I have guests in my house, then I'd make them listen to the songs that I wrote. Gina was probably on the second bottle of wine when she actually asked me to sing one of my songs again.

I remember that, because no one asks me to sing my songs again, but this was the second bottle of wine.

And I was just thinking last night, when I was with Gina's cats, how happy she looked when they jumped on her. She just lit up.

Dr. Cindy Hartley: Helping Those Who Needed Her the Most

I want to speak briefly about Gina's time in Dallas, which is where I got to know her. Gina and I started our obstetrics and gynecology residency in 1996, and I met Gina on my third rotation, three months into our internship.

And it was a crazy, busy time. I know there are probably plenty of physicians who can remember that. Gina and I spent a lot of time together. She was a very good resident. She is very exacting. If there are any residents here in the room, I know you will remember, because Gina and I talked a lot about teaching style and how hard she is on the residents. But Gina worked very hard in residency.

When we finished our residency in 1996, we looked around at different jobs and both stayed on as faculty at UT Southwestern. After about a year, I decided that really wasn't what I wanted to do, but Gina continued on, and in 2004 she became the associate residency director at one of the hospitals associated with UT Southwestern, and she received a teaching award at that time.

She thought long and hard about different things that she could do with her life and in her profession. She always felt that teaching the residents was the most important thing that she could do. Whenever she looked at private practice, she always thought those weren't the people that really needed her help the most.

She looked around at several places and decided to come to Newark to continue teaching here. At the time she thought it was the most similar to Parkland, with the patient population and having people who needed her the most. She came here and she seemed to thrive here.

We were sad to see her leave. Dr. Crosby, one of the faculty members down at UT Southwestern, says it was a great loss to UT when she left, but this was important for her to be able to advance her career.

Gina and I have been close friends since that third month of residency. We shared a birthday and for some reason that seemed to be fun. Each year we planned the great trip that we were going to take together. Sometimes it was going to be to Hawaii, some Caribbean Island, some spa, and it was fun. So far we haven't taken that trip—so I will have to think of a good place to go and think of her.

That's really what I wanted to say about Gina. She was a wonderful friend, a wonderful doctor, and really devoted herself to teaching residents and to helping women who needed that help. Thank you.

Merlin Anderson, M.D.: Missing My Niece Dr. Gina

It was always a pleasure to spend time with my niece Gina. In recent years, we often met at one or another restaurant in the Dallas–Fort Worth area where we could enjoy some good food while catching up on our activities as well as the latest family news.

Sooner or later we would get into "shop talk," sharing patient care concerns as well as the challenge it was to be part of a training program, with its responsibility for bringing along younger physicians not only in diagnostic and surgical skills but also with respect for ethical values.

In both Dallas and Jersey City, part of Gina's practice included women of African or Middle Eastern heritage who suffered from culture-based health care, or lack of it. Some were genitally scarred and others had urinary incontinence from traumatic events when giving birth to a child.

There are few Ob/Gyn specialists with the expertise, and willingness to spend their time to help improve the welfare of those who are greatly disadvantaged, but Gina did it with deep concern and compassion.

Our family's loss is also cause for mourning in the global village. —With my love,
Uncle Merlin

You Could Count on Gina

I just wanted to say—we've talked a lot about what a great doctor Gina was and she was—just a reminder that Gina was a great friend. She was someone I talked to every day and about everything. One of the hardest things to deal with all of this is not being able to talk to her about this.

Gina took care of the birth of my son and she was there for the birth of my other three children. You just could count on Gina, no matter what it was. She didn't have to agree with you, but you always could count her to be there for you.

Maile Black: Old College Days

My earliest memory of Gina was our freshman year, moving into our college dorm room. It's so wild to hear all your stories about how serious and professional she was—but all we did for five years, because we took the same year off in college too, was party and have fun. So I am excited to hear that she was so good in what she did. I am not surprised. I was really excited her about her move to Boston because we were going to hang out a lot. I am not quite ready to say good-bye to her, so I am not going to.

Natasha: Lasting Impression

It's amazing how after you're done a residency, how many times some of your mentors come to your mind and little things that you're doing. So, many days since I've been out, I'll say, "Oh a little bit of Dr. Anderson." And often times, I remember saying to many patients, "Well, if I can't fix it, I know somebody who can."

I think about her almost every day. As much as she taught me, she even helped me find the job I'm at now. One of the memories that sticks out is, in spite of how busy she was teaching and guiding us, I remember my second year of residency, it was around the time of my birthday and I remember joking, "Oh, you know I like brownies," because I knew she made them.

Sure enough, on my birthday, she came with like this container of brownies that she had made just for me and I remember thinking, "You actually took the time to make me brownies?!" So in that way, she went that extra mile to show each one of us that we were personally special—that I'll definitely miss.

Erin Barrett: Animal Lover

I was Gina's cat sitter for five years and, as everybody knows, she loved cats. I've often believed that you can accurately judge the goodness in a person by how they treat animals, and by that measure Gina was one of the best people I have known. There was nobody like Gina, unbelievably kind, thoughtful, and generous. She loved her cats dearly and gave them the best lives possible, and, in turn I know they nourished her emotionally and spiritually.

But Gina also was unbelievably kind to people. I probably saw her no more than a handful of times face-to-face, because I was always taking care of the cats when she was gone. But we communicated via email and Facebook often. She never failed to leave a thoughtful little gift for me and/or my infant daughter when I came to watch her cats, and she was always leaving sweet comments on pictures of my dog or baby that she saw on Facebook. I was working for her but yet she treated me as a friend. Gina will be greatly missed.

Vidya Ganesh: A Good Colleague

I worked with Gina Anderson since she joined the department. She was a good colleague, a good friend, and a good clinician, and I am going to miss her.

Tough and Loving

Gina was tough. She was tough on residents and she was tough on anyone whom she felt wasn't doing the best by her patients. She was a great doctor and more importantly she was a great and very loyal friend. I can only just say thank you to her for being my friend. She was very loyal. I'm going to miss her terribly but I know that she continues to be with me and with my family.

Claudia: An Awesome Teacher

I am another one of the many people who were influenced by Dr. Anderson's teaching and just her friendship. I graduated last year; I had a privilege of working with Dr. Anderson for my four years of residency. I must say that, although I started off being very afraid of her, probably like a lot of people in the room, she was a great person, an awesome teacher. I can remember many experiences on labor and delivery on call and I must say that I will definitely miss her. She has touched all of our lives and I am grateful for that.

Andy Latham: Calm and Unflappable

I was friends with Gina in college, too. Danny and I were roommates. I guess the first thing I should say is I feel blessed that I wasn't one of her medical students. It doesn't sound like fun.

It was great with Gina, because it was this weird thing that can only happen in college where I dated her roommate and she dated my roommates and so we were always together in college, from sophomore year on.

The two things I remember most about her, I'm hearing again from people talking about when she was a doctor. The one was, she could fit into any situation no matter where we were or whom we were with; she was totally happy and nonjudgmental about anyone. She was completely content where we were and the easiest person in the world to get along with. Then there are many times when I would be going out with my girlfriend and she would join us and she was never the third wheel. I mean she was just so sort of calm and fun to be with, that we never thought anything of having her, going on like sort of a double date like that.

The other thing I remember about Gina is she was totally unflappable. I mean nothing ever seemed to faze her, in sort of craziness or party or people with lampshades on their heads. She never judged anyone; she was totally unflappable. I think you would want nothing more in your Ob/Gyn than someone like her, who can't get fazed.

Hard to Shock

Andy is certainly right about that. It became a goal of ours to try to shock Gina. We had poor behavior anyway. It was all new heights to just get her to break a smile or to be shocked like anything.

Anne Egan: *When Things Fall Apart*

I am sad to know that Gina is no longer here on Earth with us. She was a beautiful woman of extraordinary intelligence and compassion.

My office is in the physician's lounge at the hospital where Gina practiced, so I had the privilege to speak with her on many occasions. One Friday a few years back she was there, and I shared with her that I was going on a spiritual retreat for the weekend. I usually don't share those things with everyone, but something about her made me feel that I could.

From that one conversation, it turned out that although our life paths were very different, we had much in common. It was a bad time in my personal life, and I told her I was reading a book by someone named Pema Chodron called *When Things Fall Apart*. Surprise: she was a fan of Pema's, too. We had many great conversations after that. I was sad to know she was leaving UH, but on the other hand was excited for the women of Boston. They were getting someone extraordinary, who was going to make a difference. Gina's premature death hurts. This is a big "Why?" that is going to take some time for us all to figure out.

Gina was right there on the edge. Leaving something behind— again. Braver than most could ever be to be heading into the unknown. An amazing woman.

The other day, I found my copy of *When Things Fall Apart* and started to read it again in honor of Gina. I keep going back to a passage on page 11: "When things fall apart, and we're on the verge of we know not what, the test for each of us is to stay on that brink and not concretize. The spiritual journey is not about heaven and finally getting to a place that is really swell. In fact, that way of looking at things is what keeps us miserable." How true.

From my perspective, Gina was right there on the edge. Leaving something behind— again. Braver than most could ever be to be heading into the unknown. An amazing woman.

I am sad and will miss you, Dr. Anderson. But I do believe in my heart that spirits are eternal, so you are with us somewhere, somehow. —With love and respect, your friend Anne Egan

Ron Anderson: Being Gina's Dad

During Gina's early California years, I was still a graduate student at Stanford University. Gina quickly built a reputation as being cute, precocious, responsible, and possessing a mind of her own. For instance, she started reading at the age of 2 but then, during the year that followed, decided she had no interest in reading. She really

loved her brother, Evan, when he arrived two years after her. Gina gladly helped look out for Evan, but when he did something he didn't like, she did not hesitate to tell him.

When Gina was 3, we moved to Minnesota because I got a job at the University of Minnesota as an assistant professor of sociology. Shortly after arriving, we moved to Edina, because it had the public school system with the best reputation. About the time Gina started to school, a new open school option became available. She was perfect for the open school because she naturally wanted to learn and create things on her own.

When Gina was only 7, Mary and I divorced but I continued to pick up Gina and Evan every Wednesday afternoon and Saturday night, which in those days was called co-parenting. In 1973, divorce was not as common, and the co-parenting arrangement made it harder for them to keep up their friendships, as they were away from their home neighborhoods so much. While both Gina and Evan coped with the split household well, I could see that it was at times a struggle for them. Having just turned 30, I was not an experienced father, but Gina made it easier, requiring less direction.

My favorite sports at the time were snow skiing and water skiing. We often went snow skiing together on weekends. During her senior year at Edina High, Gina was on the school's slalom racing team. That year both she and Evan also coached soccer.

Gina was accepted to the most competitive colleges in the United States and chose Harvard University. But even though she had been accepted, she decided to take a year off to try living in a totally different culture. Under the American Friends Service student exchange program, she moved to Parma, Italy, living with an average Italian family and attending school. It was a hugely transformative for her, as she had to rapidly learn Italian to understand what went on in class. Being a beautiful young woman of only 17, she also had to learn to enjoy the attentions of young Italian men but keep them from overwhelming her. Most of all, she was lonely and had to adjust to a totally new world. With a strong sense of what she wanted from life, she continued to grow into a mature young adult that year. Her mother and I were both very proud of her tenacity and independence.

Her five Harvard years were similar. She took a year off to work and travel, largely because her boyfriend Dave did so, but otherwise she steam rolled steadily ahead in completing her degree in applied science in 1988 in good standing. I very proudly attended her graduation, trying to get an understanding of the challenges she had surmounted in order to complete such a tough program.

Partly because she was tired of school and partly because she liked to travel the less-traveled paths, she chose to skip graduate school and go directly into the job market. For almost five years, she lived in Seattle and worked in a health-care management consulting group. Most of the time she worked with hospital administrators in Hawaii and the Western states. Seeing how women were treated in the workplace during the late 1980s convinced her to go back to school and become a doctor, a path her grandfather Anderson had been pushing her toward for years.

My approach to parenting was to give Gina and Evan full responsibility for their own choices of school, job, career, and friends. I never expected Gina to actually take her first job as an M.D. in a clinical teaching program. It gave us one more thing about which to talk. It also gave me another reason to be proud of her.

In the meantime, Nancy Kehmeier and I married in 1990, giving Gina a stepmother. Over the years, Nancy became more and more like a friend than a mother. After all, Nancy is only 14 years older than Gina, but more than that, they began to do things together like shopping and just talking about personal things. Eventually, the three of us started doing more together.

In 2005, Gina started joining us for an annual spring vacation in Mexico. She was going to join us this year in Cancun and next year in Costa Rica. She also returned for a weekend to our home in Minnesota at least once a year. Ironically, the older we grew, we felt more and more like a family.

I was proud of Gina throughout her life and now in her death. After setting up the memorial website, tributes came in from her friends that made me realize that there were many things that I did not know about her. As I put together 100s of photos for a memorial slide presentation, I realized that there were time periods like her year in Italy and her years in Seattle when we did not communicate often and I did not know enough about what she had been going through.

As I have been organizing photos of her life I came to realize that I mourn not just for her as she died but for her an innocent young girl, a maturing college girl, and a young, beautiful professional, caring woman.

Perhaps that kind of distance is in the nature of one's child becoming an independent adult. However, I wished now that she had told us more about her professional life, her friendships, and the things that stressed her. A daughter tends to be closer to her mother than her father. Because of the contentious divorce, Gina and Evan chose not to talk about one parent to the other, so I missed out on a lot of her early life.

In the last 10 years, thanks to Nancy, we spent a lot of time together, but even then, only occasionally would she open up deeply and reveal her soul, and then more to Nancy than to me. As I have been organizing photos of her life I came to realize that I mourn not just for her as she died but for her an innocent young girl, a maturing college girl, and a young, beautiful professional, caring woman.

When she died she was just in the middle of moving to a new job at Cambridge Hospital with faculty affiliation at Harvard. She always treasured her Harvard years and continued throughout her adult life to help by interviewing Harvard applicants. But a full circle return to Harvard was not meant to be.

It took months to not think daily of my mother after she died. It might take years with Gina, but that is the nature of dying young and before one's time. At least I know I will always be her dad and that I was in small ways responsible for the tremendous

contribution she has provided compassionately to thousands and thousands of women and mothers who needed care. —Ron

Julia Anderson: Gina's visit to Denver

A few years ago, when Gina came out to Denver for a medical meeting, Gary and I arranged to meet her downtown. We met in the lobby, and I remember as she walked toward us, the thought popped into my head that she looked like she owned the hotel. I was impressed that she had such a gentle, powerful presence.

We walked down the street and found a Cajun restaurant that we all enjoyed. We had such a comfortable easy connection, discussing everything from female body parts to skiing and jazz music in New Orleans. At the time, I remember wishing that I could have more times together. After dinner, we walked back up the 16th Street Mall as horse carts clipped by and felt joy at the easy companionship together. Gina, I love you and miss you.

Jackie Locklin: Impressive Responsibility

I was one of Gina's colleagues at the New Jersey Medical School. While I was there as program director, Gina impressed everyone with her keen intellect, her patient care abilities and her teaching abilities. We trusted her with the life curriculum, which is a very important part of residency training. Dr. Weiss, her chair, immediately recognized that she should be one of the select few physicians who actually gave the board exams to young physicians who had completed their training.

Justine Goode: 43 Years of Friendship

Gina and I have known each since we were little girls. It was 1968 when Gina's family moved to Minnesota. Our dads were college roommates, so their first nights in Minnesota were spent camped out at my folks' place. I remember how impressed my parents were that Gina was already reading at that early age of 4. Since our parents were such good friends, it was natural that the families spent time together. Some of my earliest memories were of the Anderson's house in St Paul: a certain tippy stool and kids posed on the stairs. We were a ragamuffin troop: my sister Dana, Gina, Evan, and myself.

We were also an imaginative lot, and each time we got together there were plays to create and perform for indulgent parents—general frivolity and silliness, including something about gorillas jumping on the bed and Podie and Evan Shampoo. Mary and Ron had these wonderful giant bean bags that called out for a game of nesting baby birds. One of our favorite and most recurring games was Runaways.

My younger sister reminded me that when we played Dana and I didn't want our younger sister Liz to play because she was too little—but Gina always included her. She would say she could be her charge; Gina would take care of her. Sometimes the games ended with hurt feelings or a bloody nose. Gina got a lot of bloody noses as a kid. But more often than not, the end of the evening would find us kids scheming for ways to extend the visit. I just don't understand how our parents knew that we really weren't glued together?

After Ron and Mary divorced, we easily fell into a weekend routine with our Dad, too. Dad would pack up the kids on Saturday or Sunday and off we went for a visit with Ron, Gina and Evan in his apartment. It was several more years before my parents divorced, but we already had the weekend Dad routine down. We were divorced kids of the '70s together, spending our weekends with our dads.

As kids we never talked about our feelings, or what it meant to us that our parents were divorced. Back then, having divorced parents was still unusual. We were just there for each other. It didn't seem so weird when your best friend was in the same situation as you. There was a built-in camaraderie and a support system that we didn't even realize helped us through.

There were hours of swimming in the pool, trips in the back of the van, reading Archie comics, Sundays on the lake, reading hundreds of Trinka's romance novels, and ski trips. We all learned how to downhill ski the same year, the Anderson kids a half-season ahead of us. Once again, it was Gina who patiently stayed with little sister Liz on the bunny hill while the rest of us raced off to try our hand at more advanced slopes. Liz credits Gina's patience and encouragement for teaching her how to ski. Gina was a really good skier and skied on the high school ski team. The last time I skied with Gina was our freshman year in college. We took a trip with our dads (just the four of us) out to Vail.

Gina may have been serious and reserved with people she didn't know but she was always game for my schemes—and we always had a great time together.

It was always an easy and natural friendship. We balanced each other out, introvert and extrovert. Gina may have been serious and reserved with people she didn't know but she was always game for my schemes—and we always had a great time together. She was good on the planning and I was the good on the execution.

As adults, life pulled us in different directions, but the friendship endured. Gina commented that in the twenty years I had been married and lived in my same little house she had moved nine times. I have been to eight of the nine places that she lived in Milwaukee, Dallas, and, of course, Jersey City.

In Milwaukee, Gina turned me on to the Spice House. In Dallas on one of my trips, we both bought ponytails, the Asian ladies at the market picking out just the right matching color for our hair. On another visit we toured the Book Depository where Kennedy was shot.

Jersey City was the best. Every time I visited, Gina had discovered new and wondrous places to take me. Our visits were a combination of adventure, tromping through the city shopping, great eats, an occasional show, movie or spa treatment thrown in—but sprinkled throughout was a constant stream of dialogue and conversation. She poked fun at my Midwestern mannerisms: I guess “super cute” isn't a New York expression? We talked about our mothers, family, world events, our aspirations, and the boxes left to be unpacked or packed.

My last visit was one of the best. We called it “A Last Hurrah” since she would be moving to Boston in a couple weeks. So we packed it in: shopping, a comedy show, Broadway, great restaurants, and even a little culture at the MOMA. At the end of American Idiot, the cast came out on stage, each with a guitar in hand, and sang Green Day’s “Time of Your Life.” Gina commented that she wanted to learn how to play the guitar just so she could play that song. What a fitting homage to our weekend. We felt like we had the time of our lives.

Gina’s last message to me was at 6:44 p.m., Monday, January 24, less than 24 hours before she passed: “Love you! And I promise that we’ll have almost as much fun in Boston.”

I hope you had the time of your life my dear, dear friend—because I know that I did. I will miss you so.

Nadine: Excited about New Endeavors

One of the first encounters I had with Dr. Anderson was when she interviewed me for this program. I remember that we talked about cats, which was obviously not uncommon for Dr. Anderson at all. I am Turkish and we talked about Turkish cats. We were on call together and we were both so excited about our new endeavors next year.

She was going to Boston and I was going to Washington, D.C., and we were just sharing our thoughts. And I remember telling her that it’s going to be very sad for our juniors that she was going to go away, because I thought that she really was a good mentor and that she could teach me a lot. Now I am really sad that she was not able to go to Boston to be able to do all the different things that she was very excited about.

Nancy Kehmeier: In Search of a Swatch in Lugano, Italy, 2004

Few can shop as well as Gina. She could buy for herself; she was just as good at helping friends shop for themselves. She always kept an eye open for gifts. Even though I was her stepmom, we shopped like lifelong best friends.

One day Gina and I found ourselves in Lugano, Italy, with nothing to do—nothing to do except take a train to see George Clooney’s house or to shop. The shopping won out. (We could see George on TV any day.) That day Gina decided she would buy the Swatch watch that she had always wanted. By the end of the day, we had seen every shop in Lugano, and more than 100 unique Swatches. The right Swatch just wasn’t to be found, however. That may have been the only time in history that Gina didn’t find a purchase meant for her. And she never did get a Swatch.

Today we are in Mexico, and I am reminded of Gina’s visits and all the shopping we did here—much more looking than buying. This would have been our sixth Mexican winter shopping together. Gina was the best shopper: tireless and able to find the best treasures.

Gina was skilled at many things and interested in so much. Still the memories of shopping fun with her will be with me for years.

Cheryl Kennedy: Extraordinary Character

I'm also a colleague of Gina's from the New Jersey Medical School. I'm not an obstetrician or gynecologist, however, and full disclosure requires I tell you I'm a psychiatrist. I didn't know Gina extremely well, but her reputation had come to me and I knew that she was a physician who would take care of very difficult patients or problems that were seemingly intractable that others wouldn't.

I always held her in my professional mind as someone I could go to with the tough stuff.

So I had the occasion to refer several patients to her. Even when these women came back and the problem remained intractable, they were so grateful for having had the encounter with Dr. Anderson because she really understood their difficulties and did her very best to try to help them. Her reputation only grew in my eyes for that. So I always held her in my professional mind as someone I could go to with the tough stuff.

So I know she has this extraordinary character that we will all miss.

Rosalie Lynn: Memories of Gina

As Gina's "California Aunt," I have flashing memories:
Of chestnut-colored hair,
Of dancing dark-brown eyes that sometimes turned black,
Of a slight Minnesota accent,
Of a sly smile,
Of a laugh that was also a giggle,
Of a young girl, poised and self-assured,
Of Gina sitting on Grandpa Anderson's favorite horse John.

Both sets of her grandparents lived in Yakima, Washington.
They loved Gina and Evan's visits.
I see the barren hills behind our home where we'd take family walks,
Gina running ahead, excited to see what was around the next bush.
Evan, I see your look of amazement and admiration
When Gina easily did what you were trying to do.

For most of Gina's life I was living in California, off her beaten path, so for most of her life, visits were infrequent. But I was able to attend her Harvard graduation. Oh how proud we were of her! And while Harvard's undergraduate regalia was drab (like all universities), the professors' crimson robes symbolized an accomplishment of what I could only dream. She seemed so happy, a life of promise ahead.

The longest time we spent together was in 2001, when Gina, Evan, Ron and Nancy, my daughter Grace and I went to Shanghai for an exhibit of Gina's great-grandfather's photographs of China taken in the early 20th century.

On the trip I experienced first-hand her calm under pressure, her aptitude for solving problems, and her deep curiosity for discovering what other cultures have to offer.

My clearest memories of Gina are from her visits during my mother's final years. Gina's visits made Mother happy for weeks. Before Gina's arrival, Mother planned how they would spend time together. During her visits, a smile never left Mother's face. And afterward, Mother recalled and reflected on their conversations.

Throughout any given year, Gina sent cards and letters, detailing things about her practice, things she knew Mother would be interested in. Often Mother marveled, "How does Gina have the time to write such nice, long letters?"

Gina wanted to make her life count. She gave her time and energy for the betterment of women in America, and she gave it personally, one woman at a time.

As you know, Gina wanted to make her life count. She gave her time and energy for the betterment of women in America, and she gave it personally, one woman at a time.

Gina's concern for women extended globally. In 2003, Mother sent Gina a newspaper article that featured Dr. Catherine Hamlin, an Australian gynecologist who gave a lifetime of service to Ethiopian women. Ethiopia is where, in 1945, Gina's grandfather Dr. Merlin Anderson moved our family.

After reading the article, Gina sent Mother the book *A Hospital by the River*, the story of Dr. Hamlin and her husband establishing the Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a hospital not far from where Gina's Uncle Dr. Merlin Anderson practiced medicine in the 1960s.

Gina wanted to visit the Fistula Hospital in 2004, but circumstances prevented it. Even so, through the Fistula Foundation, Gina gave financially to the women of the globe.

So now as we pay Gina our respect and admiration, as we share our grief of a love that ended too soon, I want to say in the words of an old Irish anti-war song:
"A doleful family I heard cry,
O Gina, we hardly knew ye."

Christina: A Part of Everyone's Life

In thinking about Gina Anderson, it's really important to think about the young doctors whom she trained and the wonderful things that she did as an educator. My name is Christina; I graduated just last year. And I remember when our department head mentioned this new faculty member whom we were stealing away from Texas—little did we know what she would offer as an educator, as a mentor, and as a friend.

I graduated and moved away to Pittsburg. Yet, anybody who's on Facebook knows that Gina was still a part in everybody's life, every day. And I very much miss her, her thoughts and feeling her with me every day.

Aparna: Dr. Anderson, I Thank You

I'm one of the residents. In the past couple of weeks, every time I thought about Dr. Anderson's Memorial Service, a memory of her came to my mind. Whether it be teaching colposcopy use as an intern, stimulating us to read a chapter in Williams, or when she would come for the postpartum rounds.

Even today, when I tell my junior residents some things, I think of Dr. Anderson, because I did read so many things because of her. Whatever I am today and whatever I will be at one point of time, Dr Anderson does have a part in me being an obstetrician and gynecologist.

I wanted to tell her that before, when we were going to go out for dinner—I never ever imagined that dinner wouldn't happen. I did text her, saying I wanted to take her out for dinner with the residents but things never worked out. But I know she's around somewhere watching all of us.

Dr. Anderson, I do miss you and thank you very much for everything that you've given.

Cara: Bonding over Pop Culture

When Dr. Anderson was not questioning why all patients on labor and delivery were not ruptured, she and I bonded over pop culture. We like to read a lot of the same things and we like food. And I really think she was an amazing teacher. She taught me a lot, and I liked her style of teaching. She always challenged me by rewarding me with cookies. I appreciate that.

So, I do think about Dr. Anderson a lot. Over the four years that I knew her, I considered her to be a mentor and also a friend—and I miss her.

Wyatt: Proud of My Cousin Gina

Gina and Evan are my closest two cousins, I would say. I looked up to her because she was older. At one point, she gave me a Harvard T-shirt. I felt so proud to say that I had a cousin who had graduated from Harvard. I also have some fine memories of time spent with her and Evan driving around in the middle of the night with Talking Heads blaring on the radio. She really had an influence on me in some ways.

I was really looking forward to her moving to Boston because that would be near to where I am with my family. I was hoping that my boys could get to know her. I can say that it's so nice to hear all these things by all of you, her colleagues. I know one person in particular who can't be here today, our grandfather Fred, would have been so proud to hear all the things that have been said. And I think that's true for all of her family, so thank you all.

Iyle: Gina's Prescription for Pain—Listening and Chocolates

I had the office next to Gina for a long time. I am not an M.D.; I am a program director. When I met her for the first time she introduced herself to me and, as I am always very careful in calling the doctors by their titles Dr. this or Dr. that, I said:

“Well, very nice to meet you Dr. Anderson.” She looked at me and she said, “Oh, my gosh, just call me Gina.”

What struck me about that is how down to earth this woman was—and she was to become my friend. We talked endlessly about books that she had been reading in book clubs or which she was going to be talking about. When I first met her she had two kitties, Scout and Tex, and I was trying to find a home for a rescued kitty. I asked her about that and she considered it for a while and then ended up adopting Marley. She called me from the store about Marley. It was just a very sweet process to see how Marley had changed from this scared little kitty to this sweet little cat that used to jump up on Gina and just have no fear. That was real testament to somebody who had a lot of love.

The last thing that I just wanted to share about Gina was how thoughtful she was all the time. If I was sad or upset about something at the office, I would just bang on her door and just pop down in a chair and just start sobbing and she would hand me these chocolates. She’d go, “Here, take this.” It was just that she always had a stash and it was just really very sweet for somebody to find time in her busy schedule to take care of me.

She would always bring home things like a little basket full of dollar items for my daughter who also loved kitties. I’d always knew Gina had gone to Target, because I’d walk in my desk in the morning and there on my desk would be a basket full of little presents for my daughter. She was friend and I loved her and I will miss her, too.

Paula Casano: No Next Time

I am an Ob/Gyn at Columbia. I was a first-year resident when Gina was my fourth-year resident. And, as Amy already alluded to, that fourth-year class is pretty terrifying, I think mostly just because they were fourth years while we were little juniors who knew nothing. Actually Gina was great and never did anything mean to me and was my teacher. We were both originally, or sort of, from Minnesota. Even though we’ve never actually intersected during our time there, somehow that felt like some kind of a bond.

Then I was really happy when Gina moved back to this area, because I had come here straight after residency for my fellowship. And I was glad to see her a couple of times in the last few years. I’m sure you all have these sort of feelings of regret. There were a couple of times that I got together with Amy, and we said, “Oh hopefully Gina could join us” and she couldn’t. It was just one of those things: Well, next time maybe.

Unfortunately next time is today, but Gina leaves all of us here in this room who know her, love her, remember her, and especially those of us who were taught by her. Tons of residents and medical students at Parkland, because it’s such a huge program, and then equal numbers of people here now and then all of the ones whom we’re going to influence

I just think it’s great that there will be so many people who will go on and carry on her teaching, her love for women and for patients.

will have a bit of Gina's teaching. I think that's amazing.

Then also the fact that she took care of patients whom not everyone wants to take care of and conditions that not everyone wants to deal with. Even as Ob/Gyns, we tend to compartmentalize our care and she chose something that not many people will do. I just think it's great that there will be so many people who will go on and carry on her teaching, her love for women and for patients.

Karen Dudley: A Kind and Loving Person

I'm one of the nurses and I just remember Dr. Anderson as being a very unique person. Loving her patients, caring for her patients and making sure that they had the very best of care. If she had to be hard on the residents, she only did it because she wanted them to learn. If she wanted to be as hard on the nurses, she only did it because she wanted them to have a unique way with her patients. She will be missed.

I remember her and her cat stories. Anytime she looked kind of down, you could go to her and ask about the cats. And immediately her face would just light up and her whole mood would change. She will be missed because she was a kind and loving person.

Prayer for Protection

I want to speak on behalf of the department of nursing, since working with Dr Anderson was very great. We don't know what tomorrow brings and I am going to pray that the Almighty God will protect Dr. Anderson. Please take care of her eternally. Thank you.

David Schieldrop: Early Diagnosis

I knew Gina in college and she was a wonderful person. Just one small anecdote about an early indication of her diagnostic skills. As you see from some of the pictures, she loved to ski and was on her high school ski team. I think it was late freshman year, we decided to go up to Mount Snow for weekend of skiing.

It was Sunday afternoon and we were trying to get as many runs as we could before the lift closed. We thought maybe we had one more chance and I stopped on the hill and I was looking around for her. I couldn't find her and I thought, well she is better skier than I am, maybe she is at the bottom. I went down, but she wasn't there. Eventually she comes limping over the hill and there is a little bit of blood on her face, it was a just a scrape, and she said, "I think my thumb is broken." I said, "Well, can you move it?" and she said, "Yeah a little bit. I suppose it's not broken. Let's go and have another round."

So we immediately got on the lift and had another round before it closed. Well, she was right, the thumb had been broken. Over the last 27 years, she has never let me forget that day I made her ski that last round with a broken thumb. So I'll miss her.

Karen Houck: Fun-loving Friend

Gina loved margaritas, so we bonded over that and going to Applebee's, guessing how many people we're going to have fake birthdays that day. We knew we were going to have to hear: "It's your birthday." Then we tried to figure out how we would get Denise James there, so we could do that for her birthday, but we never got around to it.

There were a lot of things about Gina I didn't know. I was actually surprised when I read her Facebook page: Gina had so, so many interests. She would say, "Hey! Did you read that article in *The New York Times* this week?" And I was like: "You know, the last article I read in *The New York Times* was the last one you gave me." And then, "*The New England Journal*, did you see that?"

"Yeah, the last time I read something in *The New England Journal* was the last time you gave me something to read."

When she would say that she was going away for a weekend retreat, I would ask, "Do they have a spa?"

She'd roll her eyes, but you don't know, she's was going to go see the Dalai Lama—a side of Gina that I just didn't know. I'm sorry I didn't know those sides, but the sides I had were good—like the margaritas, good; shopping, good; spas, good.

Even after Denise came back, I was fortunate that Gina and I stayed good friends. For Thanksgiving, she was going to be out of town but she had a change in her plans. So, I said, "Well, why don't you come and have Thanksgiving with my family?" And she thought about it, and said, "Yes, sure, I'll come with your family."

So, I asked my sister, "Can come Gina come and have Thanksgiving?" And she said, "Yeah, but tell her that I am serving toast and popcorn." So, I was like, okay. So, I emailed to Gina: "Yeah, but we're having toast and popcorn," and Gina emailed back, "I'll bring the jellybeans and marshmallows." And I was like, okay, this is looking like a pretty good Thanksgiving, but I don't get it.

So, I emailed back to Gina—and she replied "Charlie Brown." See that was my Gina. She read *The New York Times*, she read *the New England Journal of Medicine*, she saw the Dalai Lama, and she not only understood that my sister was talking about Charlie Brown Thanksgiving dinner, but she knew the appropriate side dishes.

My Gina knew a little bit about everything and I missed a big part of it, but the parts I got were really great. She brought the jellybeans and marshmallows to Thanksgiving dinner. My sister didn't have the toast and popcorn.

Dr. Theodore Barrett: She Made Me Question

That was my Gina. She read *The New York Times*, she read *the New England Journal of Medicine*, she saw the Dalai Lama, and she not only understood that my sister was talking about Charlie Brown Thanksgiving dinner, but she knew the appropriate side dishes.

My first conversations with Dr. Anderson went something like this. We would call each other Dr. Barrett and Dr. Anderson in those days.

- “Dr. Barrett, there is a red line on labor and delivery and I am told I am not supposed to cross that red line because there’s bacteria on one side of that red line and no bacteria on the other side of the red line. Can you explain this to me?”
- “Yesterday I witnessed a resident tell me that they are not going to deliver the fetal body until the next contraction occurs because they don’t want to increase the risk of shoulder distortion. The average time of delivery from fetal head to fetal body is 40 seconds, it says it right here in Williams, you can read it for yourself but I have highlighted it for you. Can you explain why we allow the baby’s head to turn purple before we delivered the body?”
- “Dr. Barrett, can you please explain to me why I have 11 postpartum patients scheduled at 11:45? Dr. Barrett, can you please explain why I have 36 patients scheduled between 9 and 12 noon? Dr. Barrett, can you please explain why there is no lamp in the examination room? I have a picture that I sent to you via my iPhone, there is no lamp in the exam room.”
- “Dr. Barrett, you expect me to document this Electronic Medical Record that you created. However, there is no Electronic Medical Record or a computer in the colposcopy room. How do I go about documenting the Electronic Medical Record when there is no Electronic Medical Record?:
- “Dr. Barrett, you told me that the call schedule is going to come out three months in advance and it’s now September. It means that December’s call schedule should now be out: September, October, November, December, doesn’t take a person with a degree in mathematics from Harvard to count to three.”

My response to all of her questions was similar. Gina’s was a massive intellect. She believed in precise language to describe not only medicine but also everything in life.

She made me question many of my own practice patterns and I believe I became a better physician as a result of my discussions over the years with her. She asked me probing questions about the function of the clinic and the hospital, many of which I had no reasonable answer for. She did much to protect all the people, all the patients that came within her sphere of influence.

She pursued perfection in our imperfect world.

She was an excellent physician. I know that the former chair at her institution in Texas trusted her so much that he asked her to take care of his daughter and she delivered his grandchildren.

She pursued perfection in our imperfect world.

I also believe that she was an excellent physician, and I asked her to take care of some of my family members also.

I know all of you have known Gina or any of you who have known Gina in her professional capacity as a physician at University Hospital, but many didn't get to know the other side of Gina. She was an avid reader. She had many, many interests. She was actually a funny person. I know some people may find that hard to believe because she was so serious when she was on labor and delivery in the hospital, but she was quite humorous. And it's very difficult to explain today.

In my last message to her, I wrote: "Gina, Happy New Year! I know your last day is tomorrow. How about dinner next week to celebrate your adventures in Beantown? May I also suggest the following films to get you in that Boston state of mind? *The Town*, *The Departed*, *Mystic River*—they are all gangster films.

And her response was yes.... But we never got a chance to have that meal.

Mary Scott: For My Daughter

February 19, 2011

My Beloved Daughter Gina:

I want to be in New Jersey today, sharing memories of you with your friends and members of our families. Regretfully, doctors felt it too high risk for me to fly across country so soon following surgery and ongoing rehab. I have written you many letters over our shared lifetime. This will be the first since your death, but I'm sure it won't be the last, as I struggle to learn how to live without you in my life.

Gina, I had never before experienced such joy as that I felt at your birth. I was fortunate just two years later to welcome Evan to our family, with feelings of that same magnitude. I have had innumerable moments of happiness and profound pleasure over the nearly 46 years since you entered my life, but most trace back earliest to that March 19, 1965, day you were born.

I have a treasure-trove of memories of times shared with you. Your milestones, as well as the blossoming of your growing up years. (I sometimes thought those were my growing up years, too!) And then the time of our coming to know and value each other as adults—a tricky transformation of roles. Often I yearned to live closer to you geographically so that we could spend more time together but I recognize that I always encouraged your independence, as well as cherished my own.

Some day I may actually get the boxes of photos I have from your childhood, youth, university, med school, and adult years sorted and into albums, but maybe not. All those pictures and memories, including not only our lives at home, but our travels together to visit family around the United States and to more than a dozen countries around the world—as well as our cats and dogs. While life seems linear, and is, in a clockwork, calendar sense, I have found the dynamic of skipping around past years as reminders get shaken and jumbled together in those cardboard boxes to have great

merit. It's not photos nor particular adventures, but rather the learning, laughter, getting to know one another, and reinforcing friendships they remind of that are important to me.

My dearest daughter, I have been an imperfect mother, but I have loved you beyond description, more than I can begin to measure. I hope beyond all that you felt my love every day of your life. Since your infancy I have respected and admired your quiet and formidable intelligence; your persistent, sometimes quirky curiosity; your drive to learn and willingness to work hard; and your integrity, fairness and willingness to play by the rules. There has not been a day in our lives that I have not been both proud of you—and proud for you.

From your early years, you evidenced a strong respect for friendship and cultivated and nurtured lifelong relationships. You were committed to using your professional skills to help better the lives of women who have been less advantaged than you. You displayed neither prejudice nor bias regarding race, gender, sexual preference, or religion, as evidenced in your friendships and professional choices. I applaud and honor you. You were a gentle and loyal friend to many.

You were committed to using your professional skills to help better the lives of women who have been less advantaged than you.... You were a gentle and loyal friend to many.

And, oh how I will miss the little chuckle before you broke out into laughter, most recently as we watched together John Stewart, a mutual favorite of ours.

There is an adage that gives voice to what I have been feeling keenly every day since your death, my daughter: To lose a child is to lose a piece of yourself.

While I lost an irreplaceable piece of myself on January 25, 2011, the day of your death, you inspired and challenged me throughout every day of your life. I pledge to you to respect those things I learned from you, honor those values we shared, and to the best I'm able, to expand your legacy of helping others.

I'll write more next time. My tears today are still close and raw. —Love from your Mom

Highlights

Gina took in her first breath March 19, 1965, in the Stanford University Hospital in Palo Alto, California, and released her last breath 45 years later on January 25, 2011 in Jersey City. A massive blood clot had traveled to her lungs and ruined her heart.

Two years into her life, Gina's only sibling, Evan, was born in the same hospital. The following year, the whole family moved to Minnesota. Gina and Evan were unusually close throughout their more than 40 years together.

Gina learned to read while still a toddler and, when she went to kindergarten, they bumped her up to first grade. Throughout her life, she exhibited a remarkable memory

and a brilliant mind. Even very smart people talked about Gina as smart. These gifts enabled her to be an extremely competent doctor. Yet she never considered herself better than anyone else.

Gina's brilliant mind was paired with a sense of responsibility. She did not shy away from hard work. She specialized in obstetrics and gynecology and often worked all night delivering babies or conducting surgery.

Gina graduated with honors from Edina High School in 1982 and then spent a year in Parma, Italy, as an exchange student. She entered Harvard University in 1983 and graduated with an applied science major in 1988. For five years after graduation, she moved to Seattle and worked for a health-care management consulting firm. This experience led to her desire to become a doctor. She graduated in 1996 from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and obtained a residency at the Parkland Hospital in Dallas, known for delivering more babies than any other hospital in the United States.

After completing her residency at Parkland Hospital, Gina served for five years as assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Then she moved to Jersey City and, for six years, served on the clinical faculty of the New Jersey Medical School in Newark. She recently accepted an appointment to start March 1 at Cambridge Hospital in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with clinical faculty status at Harvard.

Gina Anderson's legacy is highlighted by her service as an extremely competent doctor and mentor who compassionately took joy in helping the underserved women of all social groups in the ethnically diverse cities of Dallas and Newark. Gina's professional life was dedicated to women's health issues yet, like many doctors including her grandfather, a missionary doctor in Ethiopia, she did not always give enough attention to her own health.

In Gina's personal life during the past five years, she had learned to accept suffering not only as inevitable, but also as something from which one can learn and grow. She twice went to listen to the Dalai Lama speak. On another occasion in New York City, she went with her father to a presentation by Thich Nhat Hanh. While Gina was agnostic about the afterlife, she was touched by his message: "Surrender yourself to the now." Like most of us, she had been living her life too much in the past or future rather than in the joys and pains of the present moment.

Gina was agnostic about the afterlife, she was touched by Thich Nhat Hanh's message: "Surrender yourself to the now." Like most of us, she had been living her life too much in the past or future rather than in the joys and pains of the present moment.

Probably her favorite author for inspiration was Pema Chodron. Earlier this year, she went to a Chodron weekend workshop at the Omega Institute in New York City. In the month before she passed away, Gina went to a lecture by Karen Armstrong, renowned historian of religion and founder of the Charter for Compassion. At the lecture, Gina got an autographed copy of her latest book, *Twelve Steps to a*

Compassionate Life. The book was resting on her bedside table on her last day. The book captures the spirit of Gina's philosophy of life, which was to work compassionately and to play compassionately.

In her work, she lovingly came to the aid of thousands of women, most of whom were poor ethnic minorities, struggling with personal and social problems. In her play, she revealed her compassion by spending most of her spare time with friends, family, and attending to her three cats. She also supported many social causes with her donations and time.

During the week before her tragic death, Gina was happy and in good spirits. She was very excited about her move and had already purchased a new condo there.

Her passing left her friends and family in a state of shock and sorrow.

Life Line

1965 born March 19 in Palo Alto at Stanford University Hospital

1968 moved to St. Paul, Minnesota

1969 moved to Edina, Minnesota

1971 entered first grade in Countryside Open School; finished 6th grade in 1976

1979 graduated from Edina West Middle School

1982 graduated from Edina High School

1982 spent a year in Parma, Italy, as an exchange student with American Friends Service

1983 entered Harvard University

1988 graduated from Harvard University

1988-93 worked in Seattle for Meaghan Jared Partners as an associate in health care management

1996 graduated from Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee; moved to Dallas, Texas

2000 completed residency in obstetrics/gynecology at University of Texas Southwestern (Parkland Hospital)

2000-05 Assistant Professor, Ob/Gyn, at University of Texas Southwestern, Dallas (Parkland Hosp.); moved to Jersey City, New Jersey

2005-11 Assistant Professor, Ob/Gyn, at New Jersey Medical School/UMDNJ in Newark, New Jersey

2011 died of acute pulmonary embolism on January 25