



## Gerrit Paul Groen, II

June 9, 1937 - October 22, 2024

Paul's life was characterized by his service to those in greatest need, the empowerment of others, and innovation in the field of medicine. In Africa and the US, the ripples from his service continue today.

Gerrit Paul Groen II was the first son of Gerrit Paul Groen I and Edith Visser. His father's family had emigrated from Amsterdam and Paul was born and raised in Roseland, South Chicago, a Dutch community built around the Dutch Reformed Church and school. After his father had built a successful law practice, the family moved to Wheaton, IL where Paul attended both Wheaton Academy and Wheaton College.

Paul loved science and wanted to be a doctor from an early age. Then, as a sophomore in high school, he committed his life to God and to service as a medical missionary. This ambition to serve was encouraged by his family, who provided opportunities for him to experience missions around the world.

Paul also loved singing. During his college years, he was in a male quartet that travelled the US and Europe singing Gospel music in churches and other places that were interested in hearing about Wheaton College. Later in life, he would join the choir in nearly every church he attended.

Paul attended Medical School at Baylor University and after an Internship in Philadelphia, he accepted a call to medical missionary service from the Dutch Reformed Church Mission. He was sent to Nigeria to work in one of the hospitals established by that church – MKAR Christian Hospital.

While at MKAR, he met and married Maxine Joyce Ohlmann, the Matron (head nurse) in charge of the hospital. Paul and Macky had two sons, Gerrit Paul III and Joel Terna, and continued serving there throughout the Biafran War.

After 10 years in Nigeria, Paul returned to the States, where he did a Residency in

Orthopedics at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, MI. Upon completion of his residency, he moved the family to his home town of Wheaton, IL. Paul became a partner at Wheaton Orthopedics, practicing Sports Medicine, and was a pioneer in the use of arthroscopic surgery in the Chicago area. He also developed a model of wholistic sports medicine, building a practice that housed a doctor's office, physical therapy, and a fitness center all under one roof.

After 20 years in Wheaton and with their sons through college, Paul and Macky once again felt called to mission. Paul retired from his US practice and together with Macky, refocused their attention on Africa. They identified a major need for further medical education for African doctors in their own countries. They identified a partner with the same vision – Dr Jo Lusi, a Congolese orthopedic surgeon. Together, they set to work to create a Residency Program in Goma, Eastern Congo. It began as Doctors On Call for Service (DOCS), with training provided by visiting doctors from the US volunteering their time. It is now a fully accredited program and an independent hospital called HEAL Africa run entirely by local doctors. Its graduates serve all over Congo. Paul gave more than 15 years to this work.

During this period, Paul and Macky moved to Longboat Key where they were active in the local church and, of course, sang in the choir. In 2008, Paul and Macky officially retired to Plymouth Harbor. Paul found it to be a welcoming, kind community and found a new purpose serving as an unofficial chaplain visiting the sick of his community. During Covid, this care proved invaluable for the many members of his community whose families were unable to see them.

Paul is survived by his wife, Maxine, two sons, and five grandsons as well as three siblings.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to <https://www.healafricardc.org/>

# Tribute Wall



“ So sad to hear the news.  
Paul would visit my wifes Mom Marilyn Barkley every week when we were so far away in Australia.  
Lot's of love to the family.  
We loved him a lot.  
Clayton and Jagger

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**Clayton Higginson** - July 14, 2025 at 09:32 AM

CW

“ My husband and I first met Paul and Macky in Egypt and we became Very good friends. We visited them in Cancun went on cruises with them, and when I went to Florida, we met on several occasions. I have been trying to call and finally Decided to check the Internet. I asked His advice several times regarding orthopedic surgery. I am so so sorry to learn this news and my condolences to Macky and the rest of the family.

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**Carolyn Walker** - November 30, 2024 at 11:00 AM

RS

“ Dr, Paul Groen, was a beautiful bass vocalist at Christ Church LBK choir. We loved him so very much. He enhanced our choir and lives in so many ways. He was often called upon to say a departing prayer at the end of choir practice. His thoughts included everyone, by name, who mentioned earlier in the choir practice that asked for thoughtfulness for a particular friend or family member. Paul was a GIANT healer with his prayers. His skills as a physician remain today after three decades in Africa. He knew how to heal our souls and our bodies. He lived modestly and dedicated his life to Mackey with his very last breath. I will miss my dear friend Paul, and will remember him forever. Thank you for being part of my life, Becky Schneider-Horton

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**Rebecca Schneider-Horton** - November 03, 2024 at 05:51 PM

BP

“ I remember Paul well at Christ Church. Well done, good and faithful servant!  
Rev Bruce W. Porter

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**Bruce Porter** - November 03, 2024 at 03:29 PM

NC

“ *The night before Greta’s and my wedding, Uncle Paul and Uncle Floyd drove from our dinner to check on my brother who was sick and his sick five month old in their hotel to see if there was anything they could do for them. That meant a lot and illustrates his selflessness when he could have just stayed at the party.*

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**Nathan Clement** - October 29, 2024 at 09:38 PM