



Mitchell Willens, M.D.

January 26, 1951 - September 17, 2012

Dr. Mitchell Willens (Mitch) (61) died peacefully in his sleep at home on September 17, 2012. A service will be held Thursday, September 20 at 1 p.m. at the Stewart Family Funeral Home with Rabbi Neal Katz officiating. Burial will be held at Rose Hill Cemetery under the direction of Stewart Family Funeral Home. Dr. Willens was born in Chicago, Illinois, January 26, 1951 to the late Jordan Gilbert Willens and Harriet Arenson Willens. He was a graduate of Mather HS in Chicago, IL. He earned a BA degree from Baylor University, where he met the love of his life, Claudia "Corky" Robinson. He continued his education at Chicago Medical School, earning his M.D. degree in 1976. After graduating from Chicago he served in the Indian Health Division of the U.S. Public Health Service in Claremore, Oklahoma from 1977-79. An internship and residency program in Obstetrics and Gynecology was completed in 1982 at St. Joseph Hospital and University of Texas Affiliated Hospitals in Houston. Dr. Willens and his wife moved to Tyler in 1982 where he began his private practice of medicine. He was a diplomat of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology from 1986 to present. Dr. Willens was an active staff member at Trinity-Mother Frances Hospital and East Texas Medical Center, the latter of which he was currently serving as Medical Staff Section Chairman of Obstetrics and Gynecology. He was also on the consulting staff at University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler. In 1996, Dr. Willens and several colleagues formed Tyler Obstetrics and Gynecology, where he was a founding partner and was currently serving as managing

partner. He was a member of Smith County Medical Society, where he served as President in 1998. He served as Chief of Staff of Mother Francis Hospital in 1995. He was a six-year Governor of the American College of Surgeons. He served as the President of the North Texas Chapter of the American College of Surgeons. He was currently serving as Vice Chairman of the American College of Surgeons Political Action Committee Board and was also a member of Texas Surgical Society, where he received the James B. Thompson Award in 2005. Dr. Willens was highly active on hospital committees such as the Executive Committee, Credentials Committee, Medical Records Committee, Emergency Committee, and Utilization Review. He was a member of a wide range of professional societies such as the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the American College of Surgeons, the Gynecologic Laser Society, the International Society of Gynecologic Endoscopy, the Society of Laser Medicine and Surgery, the American Medical Association, the Texas Medical Association, the National Perinatal Association, the Texas Perinatal Association, and the American Fertility Society. Dr. Willens also served on the Editorial Board of the peer-reviewed journal Postgraduate Medicine in 1985 and was a long-standing Editorial Board member of East Texas Medicine. Publications include "Eclampsia" (Medical Journal of St. Joseph Hospital, June 1982) and "Obstetrical Emergencies in the 90s" (East Texas Medicine). Dr. Willens was an avid Dallas Cowboy fan. Win or lose, he held season tickets for he and his boys since 1991! He was an expert wine connoisseur and a deeply committed family man. His greatest devotion and source of pride was to his wife and two sons. His gentle and quiet spirit endeared him to patients and friends alike. His dry sense of humor and quiet chuckle was quintessentially Mitch. He cherished teaching and mentoring future generations of medical professionals, including nurses, physicians assistants, and family practice residents. On one occasion he was honored to mentor a physician's assistant student that he had delivered years earlier. Beyond his deep love and loyalty to his family, he loved solving the daily challenges of the practice of medicine.

Nothing gave him greater satisfaction than watching the many children he delivered grow and develop into highly productive members of society. Dr. Willens was predeceased by his parents. He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Claudia "Corky", his sons, Josh of Birmingham, Alabama and Zach of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; his sister, Roxane Helstrom and husband, Bob of San Diego, California, his mother-in-law, and father-in-law, Claud and Jean Robinson of Grove, Oklahoma; brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law, Tom and Linda Barr of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Sam and Terry Robinson of Grove, Oklahoma, and Mark and Kim Robinson of Miami, Oklahoma and numerous nieces ,and nephews. Pallbearers will be Larry Burks, Ed Comer, Dr. Gary Gross, Mike Gross, Dr. Stephen Idell, Tracy Lisner, Steve Morgan, and David Yee. Honorary pallbearers will be the physicians of Tyler Obstetrics and Gynecology. Memorials may be sent to Congregation Beth El or a charity of your choice.

Tribute Wall

ML

“ Thoughts and prayers to family and friends. Such a sudden and unexpected loss. Dr. Willens will deeply missed by so many.

Melissa Lang - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

PS

“ Dr. Willens was a caring, intelligent professional in women's health and will be sorely missed. He was tough, fair and very compassionate in caring for his patients. God rest your soul and our condolences to your family.

Phillip Suiter - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ So sorry for your loss. This is also a great loss to Tyler, TX. Dr. Willens was a very nice person and highly respected by everybody. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Josh and Chris Russell and family - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SD

“ Our sympathyto Dr. Willens' family. Dr. Willens delivered all three of our children, even though he wasn't on call at the time of any of their births. He truly cared about his patients.

Shelby Davidson - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

VB

“ He was a great man who took care of my family for many years and helped bring into this world 3 lovely young ladies. We would keep up with each others children and spouses thru the many years. He loved his family dearly. Thanks again for being my friend and taking care of us thru the years. :) My prayers are with you.

Vicky Bright - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

TS

“ Dr. Willens was my doctor for several years and saw me through the birth of both my children. His witty humor is what made me adore him even more. When my son was born, I was in the hospital and was in the middle of pushing and much to OUR SURPRISE my son was breach. Dr. Willens raised up and said, "this baby is breach...did we know this baby was breach?" I went on to deliver my son breach because of the amazing talent, strength and courage that Dr. Willens himself had and that he provided me. I will greatly and forever miss him and will always cherish the story of the doctor asking the patient!!!

Trista Simmons - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

VJ

“ Corky, Josh, & Zach,
The obituary is a tribute to all Mitch's hard work on behalf of his patients and family. He cared so much about all of us and especially you all. He will be missed so much.

Vivian & Newton Jones - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ Words can not express the love I have for Dr. Willens. I was grateful to have been his patient for 22 years! Not only was he a brilliant man, his calming and gentle spirit was like none other. We always had to talk the western industry and country music before we got around to health concerns. He was a wonderful doctor, but an even greater person. He will forever hold a special place in my heart. Love and prayers to his precious family.

Jamie Lou Coats Calicutt - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

TN

“ Dr. Willens was my Doctor for almost 30 years. I will miss him. He was the best Doctor you could ask for he loved his patients. Wow just can't believe he is gone but will never forget him. My prayers are with you all. God Bless

Tanja Clinton Nunn - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

BF

“ Corky, Zach & Josh,

*We are saddened to hear of your loss.
Our thoughts and prayers are with you.*

Its True...Life is a journey and death is a destination. Mitch's life and journey were truly a blessing to his family and friends.

May God bless you with love, peace & comfort.

Blake Stowe & family - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DJ

“ I do not know where to begin or end. Mitch has been an integral part of my life since he accepted to be my Big Brother in fraternity life at Baylor University in 1970. We have had a close friendship for over four decades. He has always been there for me and I am now going to attempt to adjust to the sudden void in my life. My pain is great and I will miss him so much. I love you Mitch - thank you for being my friend and always being there for me. David

David and Beth Jackson - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

AP

“ Mitch Willens was a fantastic man . He lived his life making a difference in other peoples lives. My story is like so many others but we use to tease that he "got me pregnant"..after a long infertility problem, he was able to find the problem in two months and we were blessed with our first son...who we named Mitchell.....after Dr. Willens. Corky, we are so sorry for your loss. God Bless your family. He will be greatly missed. Thank you for sharing him with us Corky.

Andrea Price - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

KE

“ Mitchell Willens, M.D.

Kelly Edwards - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

Jl

“ We are so sorry for the lost of Dr. Willens. He was a great man. Our daughter has been under his care for 12 yrs. With his love and knowledge 3 1/2 months ago we were given a beautiful grandson. He performed a c-section on a full term baby that was suppose to be premature. We will never forget him. Our prayers and thoughts go out to his family and friends.

John and Mary Iley - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SC

“ Dr. Willens stood out as a bright, thorough, and caring doctor. He went above and beyond more times than I can count. He is irreplaceable and will be sorely missed.

Stephanie Christian - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

MC

“ so sorry for your loss, he was truly a wonderful doctor. i worked with tyler obgyn 1999-2004 and dr willens. we are praying for your family!

michelle carrillo - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

NK

“ i had the privilege of working with dr willens over twenty one years assisting in many births. he took the best care of his patients. he was a quiet man with a wonderfully dry sense of humor. i am so sad that i will not have the opportunity to work with him again. i wish i had the chance to tell him this. my thoughts and prayers are with his family. may God comfort all of you in this sad time of your lives. with love and respect. nancy kniffen rn/ tmfhs

nancy kniffen - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ Mitch was a blessing to me through two pregnancies and the beginning of a career. He will be missed.

Amy Mullins, MD - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

AD

“ Thoughts and prayers are with you. We remember nothing but fun times and lots of laughter from the first day we met. Starting out in the same neighborhood, visits in London and remembering all of the good days and good laughs.
Mitch did good!!

Andy & Peggy Dement - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

VP

“ There are no words that can express the gratitude or admiration I had for Dr. Willens. There are many people on this earth that are walking testimonies to the care and dedication he had for his patients and their families. He was our quiet hero and will be deeply missed.

Vickie Proudfoot - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

BB

“ WORDS ARE INSUFFICIENT TO EXPRESS MY DEEP ADMIRATION FOR DR. MITCH, A HUMBLE MAN, HE TREATED EVERYONE WITH KINDNESS AND RESPECT. I FIRST MET DR. MITCH WHEN HE WAS DOING HIS RESIDENCY AT UTHSC-HOUSTON WHERE HE WORKED IN THE CHARITY OB CLINIC TAKING CARE OF THE POOR MOTHERS OF HOUSTON WITH CARE AND COMPASSION. I WAS ALWAYS GLAD TO SEE HIM EACH DAY FOR 24 YEARS AT TMFHS AS HE MADE HIS DAILY ROUNDS. A LEADER AMONG PHYSICIANS, HE WAS LOOKED TO BY ALL FOR GUIDANCE. GOOD BY DEAR FRIEND! AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS YOUR FAMILY.

BILL BELLENFANT - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DY

“ Like David Jackson, Mitch befriended me when I came to Baylor. Imagine being one of the only asians on campus in the 70's. He is as close as my own flesh and blood brother . Always there and caring.

David Yee - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JP

“ Dr Willens delivered our baby boy to us 15 months ago. How blessed we all are to have had so many years of him bringing beautiful life into this world. He will be deeply missed.

John & Mary Petry - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DC

“ Words cannot describe our sorrow for the loss of Dr. Willens. Corky, we so enjoyed our times together and appreciate you and Mitchell for the tremendous support and good friendship. We have lost a great person who made the world a better place to be. Our prayers are with you, your sons and your family!

David and Sally Cain - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ I would like to express my most sincere condolences to your family. To me and my family, Dr. Willens meant so much. He was the doctor for 7 of us. When it was all said and done, he had been the doctor to help bring 14 of our angels into this world. His patience, knowledge and bow ties saw us through the best, and for some of us, the saddest moments of our lives. We will never forget all that he did for our families.

Jennifer Sweaks - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

NG

“ I HAVE WORKED FOR TYLER OB GYN AND WHAT A GREAT FAMILY. DR. WILLENS WAS ALWAYS SO KIND AND SUCH A CARING PERSON AND DOCTOR. IT IS HARD TO WALKBY HIS OFFICE AND KNOW HE IS NOT HERE. HE WILL BE MISSED AND WE WILL ALL TRY TO BE THE BEST FOR HIS PATIENTS. MY LOVE AND PRAYERS TO YOUR FAMILY NAOMI

NAOMI S. GARNER - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JW

“ Dr. Willens was a wonderful doctor. I will never forget what he did for me during my years of infertility. He will be greatly missed.

Jodi Weaver - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JO

“ Please accept our sincere condolences and prayers for you and family. Mitch was a great friend and I admired how he interacted in the political sphere on the behalf of Medicine. John Winter and I shall raise a glass in his memory when we get together at the upcoming Texas Surgical Society meeting.

Sincerely,

John O'Brien

John O'Brien - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JA

“ *Dr Willens delivered my daughter Melissa Rose on July 22, 1985, when I was 38 years old, and performed my surgery 4 years later.*

Sure have missed him since moving from Tyler in 1993!

After delivery I had complications. Because Dr. Willens knew this was likely to occur he was really on his toes, and kept the effects down to a minimum. The best part was his kindness as he stayed with me through it all, until out of danger. I was so afraid.

In spite of measures to be sure I didn't get pregnant, the Lord knew the world and I need Melissa! She has always been such an amazing treasure.

The baby Dr. Willens delivered is now an RN BSN, graduating from UT Tyler, Longview Campus in May of 2009, an excellent and very caring nurse.

Judy Knapp Arroyo - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

RR

“ *My heart is heavy for the entire Willens family. Dr. Willens had an incredible gift of making every patient feel as if they were his favorite. 19 years ago on September 9, 1993 he brought my son into this world, missing his wedding anniversary dinner to stay to deliver the "premium" baby as he called Connor. What an amazing blessing he was to me and to so many others. God bless you all. He was so loved.*

Robin Rowan - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CH

“ Dr. Willens delivered my son in April, 1983, in an emergency C-section at Glenwood Hospital, with David Knowles. As a nurse, I had challenged him about the documentation of unnecessary C-sections. Then things went south. His first comment to me was, 'do you see that cone head? This is not an unnecessary c-section!'. I always loved his dry wit and absolute resistance to ad to the drama of an expectant mother. God's blessings.

Christine Harper - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ Dr. Willens was a very special person in my family's lives. He delivered two of my children. He missed out on the third delivery because he was gone on a Boy Scout campout, as I recall. He 'scolded' me for not waiting on him. I 'scolded' him for leaving me cause I knew my baby would be born on the 14th! I will miss his humor and compassion. My condolences to the family.

Ann-Marie Marsh - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ I would like to express my most sincere condolences to your family. Dr. Willens meant so much to me and my family. He was my doctor for 17 years and is truly irreplaceable. He helped me through the best and worst times in my life. I will always be grateful to Dr. Willens, as he saw me through infertility, loss, and two wonderful births. There were many laughs and tears shed in his office and I will miss him dearly.

My two children were fortunate enough to meet Dr. Willens this past Labor Day Weekend when we ran into him at Home Depot. I introduced them to Dr. Willens - telling them that this is the person responsible for bringing them into this world; the first person to hold them and a person that made my dreams come true.

My thoughts and prayers go out to his wife and two sons. Thank you for sharing such a wonderful person with us. He made such positive impacts on many of our lives and will forever hold a special place in our hearts.

Lisa Musselwhite - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM



“ "When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am in who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart."

Rest in Peace Dr. Willens. You will forever be missed.

September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ I was a patient of Dr. Willens. He was a great Doctor and cared about his patients. He always asked about my family and my son (Zachary) who he delivered. I will never forget the Happy Birthday bow tie he wore when he delivered Zachary. I'm a Flight Attendant and he would tell me that one of these days he would see me on one of my flights. He was such a great man. He will truly be missed by all of his patients. God Bless!

Jessica Spencer - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LK

“ Dr. Willens delivered my son who is almost 2, and saw me for my first few visits of my new pregnancy. We trusted him so much, and he will be greatly missed. He was an outstanding and caring doctor. Our most sincere condolences.

Laura Kraft - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

VH

“ You have my deepest sympathy. He was way to young to leave us, and I am grateful he was here to do my surgery last year. I often saw him at the symphony and while working at the hospital & he was always his same friendly self. We will all miss him.

Verna Holliman - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CH

“ We feel so blessed to have had Dr. Willens care for our daughter through the delivery of her son and through a surgery. We felt that she had the best care possible and he was always cared about what our family was doing. What an impact he made on so many, and he will be missed greatly. Our sympathy goes out to his family that he loved so much.

Cheri Henderson - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CT

“ *The College Of Nursing at UT Tyler would like to extend our condolences. Many of us had worked with Mitch and many have been his patient for years. We are all very saddened by this loss and wish the family the best in this time.*

College of Nursing at UT Tyler - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DC

“ *Dr Willens was my doctor for 25 + years. He was always a very good doctor, I will miss he so much. I am in total shock of his death.*

Debbie Cornett - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

AN

“ *Dear family of Dr Willens,
I am so sorry for your loss. Words cannot express the respect I had for him and gratitude for his commitment to his patients. Not every doctor has a passion for their job the way he did. He delivered all four of our children. Through the years i have appreciated some of the funny memories of him with that dry sense of humor. I am going to miss him so much. My prayers are with you.*

Angie N. - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ *I will miss Dr. Willens wit and compassion. It was my great fortune to be his patient for the past 24 years. I have so many Dr. Willens stories, now they are treasured memories. What a blessing he has been to so many. My prayers are with his family.*

Jan Hicks - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

KW

“ Praying for you and your sweet family.
All our love,
Karen and Dan

Karen and Dan Walker - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

ED

“ Saw him each year at the TX College meeting. A very nice person.
Always interested in improving health care. Sorry for your loss

Ernest Dunn - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

TG

“ My deepest condolences to the Willens family on your loss of
beloved Dr. Willens. He was a well respected man whom I enjoyed
working with. I am extremely sorry for your loss.

Tanya Gill - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CG

“ Words cannot express how saddened I am to hear of Dr. Willens death. He delivered our one precious daughter into this world in 1991, and performed several procedures on me for . During one procedure, I began bleeding internally..he rushed back to the hospital at midnight to perform what would be a life saving laparoscopy to stop the hemorrhaging. Hid words I'll never forget as they rushed me into the OR,"I tried to go to sleep, but knew I had to come back to the hospital...now I know why." He discovered a bleeding disorder that had gone undiagnosed for 27 years. A successful hysterectomy soon followed. I will miss his gentle spirit, and the way he ALWAYS asked about Emily & my husband, John. We always exchanged parent stories...I know he was so proud of his sons and always indulged me with my stories (and pictures) of Emily as he would update me on his sons . To his family, I am so sorry for your loss...he was a wonderful physician and am grateful for our miracle he helped bring into the world. The Tyler medical community has lost an icon, and I have lost probably the best physician I'll have during my life time. Thank you, Dr. Mitchel Willens. You will be missed.

Charlisa Goodman - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

WT

“ I called to make an appointment with Dr. Willens and I was deeply saddened when I was informed that he had passed away. I have been a patient of his for 8 years and I will really miss him. He was so sweet, caring, tough, and witty. He helped me get through a very difficult time in my life and I will be forever grateful for his caring and compassionate nature. He always inquired about my progression in school and always wanted to make sure that I was staying on the right path. I re-located out of Tyler, Texas and I still remained a faithful patient of his. I tried out a new OB/GYN in my area but there was no comparison. He was the best that anyone could ever have for and he will be greatly missed.

Whitney Terry - September 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM