

IN MEMORIAM



TOURAJ SHAFAI, MD, Ph.D, FAAP

Dr. Touraj Shafai, 81, of Riverside, California, husband, father, and grandfather, passed away October 24, 2018, following a short but difficult battle with [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis](#) (ALS). His passion for life, contributions to the community, and expertise in medicine were an inspiration to all who knew him. His legacy will be carried on by his wife Susan, his four children, John, Sepehr, Susie, and Roxana, and his seven grandchildren, Alexandra and Benjamin from his late son Michael, Sophia and Nicholas from his son John, and Isabelle, Allison, and Emily from his daughter Susie. From a young age, Touraj expressed his desire to become a physician. He would joke that the reason he pursued medicine was because of his almost identical appearance to his great-uncle, the only doctor of the family. After obtaining his medical degree at the University of Tehran, Touraj moved to the United States to further his education. Arriving in Washington DC in 1963, Touraj went on to receive his Ph.D. in biochemistry from Georgetown University in 1969. After completing his residency in Syracuse, NY, he moved to Buffalo, NY, working at the Oishei Children's Hospital. While watching the Rose Bowl on television with his children on a snowy Buffalo New Year's Day, Touraj and his family decided that they would move to sunny southern California. By the next Christmas, Touraj moved to Riverside to take over as Chief of Pediatrics at Riverside General Hospital. Touraj later entered private practice and continued to provide care at local hospitals. He established the Children's Medical Group in order to deliver the highest level of medical care for children in the Inland Empire. Treating each child as if his own, Touraj cherished every one of his patients, establishing multi-generational relationships, treating the children of his former patients and even their grandchildren. With a firm belief that every child should be afforded the highest quality of health care, Touraj never turned away a patient, providing support to numerous organizations in Riverside for at-risk children and assisting governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations including First 5. Touraj was a pioneer in expanding medical care in Riverside, helping to nurture and teach new doctors in the area and even assisting with the establishment of UCR Medical School. As part of the clinical faculty of UCR Medical School, Touraj opened his medical practice to numerous students, hoping that once their schooling was completed they too would practice medicine in the Riverside area. As an advocate for breastfeeding, Touraj served as chair on the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Breastfeeding. He wrote numerous papers on the benefits of breastfeeding, shared research with his patients on the importance of breastmilk for early child development, and wrote numerous grants on behalf of hospitals in Riverside to expand services for breastfeeding. Touraj instilled the importance of service to others in his own children. He was supportive of their academic and extracurricular activities, encouraging awareness in domestic and international politics, community service, and Persian history and culture. An avid runner, Touraj competed in countless 5Ks, 10Ks, half marathons, and full marathons throughout southern California up until the last few months of his life. Touraj was also a prolific gardener; at least five locations throughout Riverside are home to the hundreds of plants and trees that he

personally planted and nourished. They will continue to live on as a reminder of his gentle nature and soul. In his memory, please donate to: the ALS Association: <http://www.alsa.org> or the ACLU Foundation of Southern California <https://action.aclu.org/give/support-aclu-socal>.