



MARY ALFORD, DDS and GENE ALFORD, MD

2023 Patton Award Recipients

★ Greatly deserving of the Patton Award, indeed! When asked to reflect upon the past many years, Mary and Gene Alford vulnerably offer an authentic lens into the journey of their lives; congruent to what seems to be the directives and movement of God’s gracious Hand upon their decisions. As one of the finest Plastic Surgeons and one of the most skillful Dentists, Gene and Mary are truly two wonderful hearts turned more and more toward God’s great heart as they selflessly serve their families, church and countless in their community. However early on, Mary and Gene established what they determined would be the best “Guiding Principles” to start their adult lives. What they share are some incredible twists and turns and detours all the way to current day. In the following survey penned by Mary, one may see the profound Reality they encountered and embraced...



“Our Guiding Principles for our career and life:

1. Anywhere but Houston!
2. “Big City Medicine” is not for us!
3. Well attended, large churches sounded horrible!
4. God speaks in general terms!

Thankfully, God is, and always has been, in charge of our story.

It wasn’t until Gene and I were married that we – two strong willed, Get-it-Done kind of folks – started having some real-life disappointments. If we had been wise, we would have seen that our plans might not be His.

Example #1:

We wanted to stay in San Antonio, Texas for medical residency. God chose Philadelphia, PA. Jesus was there.

Example #2:

God sent us to Ann Arbor, Michigan for post-residency training. Jesus was there.

Example #3:

God brought us a job opportunity in Houston. What?! We had said anywhere but there! Interestingly, we were beginning to see that Jesus had been present in our two previous detours – Philly and Ann Arbor – so maybe Jesus was in Houston, too.

Example #4:

God put an HIV dental clinic on the carpool route that I drove regularly. Patients who changed my life. Jesus was there.

Example #5:

God led a patient’s wife to invite us to First Presbyterian Church – Houston. Our first Sunday was the day to sign up for Mo Ranch. Jesus was there. Was there a pattern developing? Where He sent us -- Jesus was there?

Example #6:

Our family was getting older, busier and more opinionated. The only week available for family vacation was the same week as FPC’s first family mission trip to Honduras, Central America. We signed up! Jesus was there.

Finally, we started looking for Jesus everywhere we went. And He was there. He was at the hospital, at AOS, in our home. Gene saw who was doing the real healing at the hospital. Jesus was there. When Gene was squashed by the tree, Jesus was there. When Charles died, Jesus was there. And for the last fifteen years, God has continued to say, “I am there.” We had some very strong opinions in our late 20’s, and God has graciously led us from that path of our initial four guiding principles which were based on “our wants.”

If you received an invitation to this party tonight -- YOU are the one, each of YOU, that God sent, that God used, when He needed Jesus there.”

~ Mary and Gene

