



## *IN MEMORIAM*

**Pamela E. Prete, M.D., F.A.C.P., M.A.C.R.,  
Colonel, US Air Force, MC, Senior Flight Surgeon  
Chief of Aerospace Medicine  
Section Chief of Rheumatology, VALBHS  
Professor Emeritus, Medicine  
UC Irvine  
1948 – 2016**

Dr. Pamela Prete completed her medical education at Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital, in Philadelphia, PA with Honors. After her internship and residency in internal Medicine, Dr. Prete completed dual fellowships in Rheumatology at the Edward Daniels Faulkner Arthritis Clinic and in Clinical and Cellular Immunology on an NIH training grant at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, at Columbia University in New York, NY. After joining University of California, Irvine and the VA Long Beach Healthcare System, she was professor emerita of medicine and section chief of rheumatology.

Her early basic science research was on sex differences in the murine model of lupus, but later she concentrated on understanding the contributions of synovial fluid lipids on inflammation and the clinical aspects of rheumatic diseases in veterans. For this she was awarded the Jane Wyman Humanitarian Award, Arthritis Foundation (AF) Award for Distinguished Research in Rheumatic Diseases and City of Los Angeles Commendation (Mayor Tom Bradley) for researching treatments, preventions and cures for people with rheumatic diseases. Her online arthritis teaching videos for residents and medical students were developed for the Veterans Administration, and won an “Outstanding Contribution and Creative award.” An active teacher both at the VA and the University, Dr. Prete won five excellent teaching awards. She was also past president of the Southern California Rheumatology Society.

For the American College of Rheumatology (ACR), she has served on the committee on Government Affairs and for many years was an Arthritis Advocate to the US Congress. She chaired the ACR task force for a white paper on Healthcare in the 21st Century. She is a voting member of the ACR committee on the guidelines for treatment of spondyloarthropathies. Concurrently, Dr. Prete served as chief of aerospace medicine in the United States Air Force Reserves and was deployed twice in defense of her country, as well as awarded four meritorious service medals and two national defense medals. She retired a colonel after 20 years and received congressional recognition as “Woman Veteran of the Year” for her arthritis research, teaching and dedication to Veterans.

Dr. Prete was very active at teaching and mentoring the rheumatology fellows. She’s was a past program director and then director of the Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Teaching Program for the Rheumatology fellowship program. She continued her clinical research in the aspects of rheumatic disease especially the spondyloarthropathies and teaching the techniques and many uses of musculoskeletal ultrasound for rheumatologists.

She was named as a Best Doctor in America a number of times and Southern California Super Doctors in Los Angeles magazine, which features the top five percent of doctors in Los Angeles and Orange counties. She was recognized as a Master of the American College of Rheumatology which is one of the highest honors the College bestows to members who have made outstanding contributions to the field of Rheumatology through scholarly achievement and/or service to their patients, students and profession.”

Dr. Prete was also a senior flight surgeon and a Colonel in the US Air Force. A veteran herself she had a unique understanding of veterans and chose to dedicate her life in service to them. Dr. Prete will be missed by all of her Veterans and those who worked with her at the VA Long Beach Healthcare System and University of California, Irvine.

Dr. Tejal Thakkar  
Chief of Rheumatology, VA Long Beach