



The Oslerian

A Message from the President

Rolando Del Maestro

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The Best Part Started with a Kiss: Memories and Reflections

There is a small village in northern Italy called Borgo Val Di Taro (Borgotaro). It is nestled in a beautiful valley situated amongst a series of rugged hills as the Taro River meanders its way to the Po River north of Parma. You can still drive an ancient and tortuous road from Parma to Borgotaro as it snakes beside the Taro River. Hugging the river, the road quickly reaches Borgotaro's Chiesa di San Rocco (San Rocco Church). The road to the left of the church leads to the cemetery and farms on the hillside. I was born in a no longer existent small hamlet beside the cemetery in 1949.

My father, the last of seven children, grew up in a now abandoned farm further along the cemetery road. In 1939 he was drafted into the Italian army and would fight in Albania, Greece and eventually on the Greek island of Corfu. There he dealt with the ravages of malaria and capture by the Germans. In

1944 my father after escaping from a prison hospital would returned to fight with the Partigiani (fighters in the Italian underground) until Borgotaro was liberated.

My father, on returning to Borgotaro, looked up my mother who was engaged to a fellow soldier who my father had meet in the prison camp. He relayed the news that her fiancé had been sent to the Russian front and was in the Battle of Stalingrad. The war



My mother and father on their wedding day.

ended in 1945 and her fiancé did not return. My mother and father began to see each other. My mother's fiancé would eventually return in 1947. The world and love had moved on and my mother and father were married in early 1948.

After the war Borgotaro was a singularly difficult place to both survive and bring up a family. My mother and I, a three year-old, walked from my father's parents' home to the railway



**President
Rolando Del Maestro
54th AOS President
installed at the 2023 Annual
Business Meeting.**

President's Message *(Continued from page 1)*

station to say goodbye to my father. He was taking the train to Genoa to sail off to Canada.

We would follow 7 months later, cross the Atlantic in the dead of winter and arrive in Halifax on December 24, 1951. Christmas was celebrated with candy and an orange on a train to Toronto where we were reunited with my father.



Passport picture of my mother and myself for coming to Canada



My father, mother, and me after arriving in Canada

Our family would settle in Petrolia, Ontario since there was construction work for my father at the new White Rose Refinery in the Sarnia area.

When I was in high school we had a group (outcasts by any other name) who wrote poetry. So enthralled was

I, that I decided to become a poet. When I told my mother about this ambition, she ran about the house screaming, "How will you eat!" My father was more understanding. Five years of war had softened his approach to life.

I still read poetry and write a little. Despite several submissions, I had only had one poem published before my second called "Storm Over Venice" was published in the August 2022 edition of the Oslerian. My first poem was called "To Pam." It appeared in the poetry journal *Afterthoughts*, in 1995. My mother (mothers are wise in that way) and the editors were clearly correct. Based on my productivity and success, neurosurgery was a better choice of careers. Nevertheless, I will include my first literary triumph to my wife Pam.

To Pam:

*Time has parted our hearts;
Divided us like a stone in a stream
The stone is but small;
Flooding rivulets will join again—
The Vortex intertwined.
Streams always flow to the sea.*

Rolando

I would go off to the University of Western Ontar-

io in London, Ontario, Canada. In the spring of our 3rd year in medical school, we had a course called Community Medicine with the 4th year nursing students. The course affectionately referred to as Comedy Meds was focused on medicine and the community. At the time my focus was on one of the nursing students in the class by the name of Pam Wyatt. Hot pants were in that year and I remember them well. Pam had a boyfriend at the time so life went on. However, that spring at the end of our third year I saw Pam studying in the library and realised that I might never see her again since she would soon graduate. I wandered over to the table and asked if she would like to go for a beer. Very brave. She mentioned something about a boyfriend and I wandered back to the stacks to do some studying. A few hours later but who should appear, Pam, who said maybe we could go out for coffee.

We walked down the hill, crossed the bridge and followed the path along the Thames River to a coffee shop in one of the high rise apartment buildings. We talked about plans for our futures, dreams and aspirations and then it was time to return to the library. As we walked back along the river darkness was falling and the stars were coming out. We had time to appreciate stars more than. I asked if I could kiss her. Strange thinking back at such a request. She agreed. It was a nice kiss. Not too short or too long. We then continued back to the library.

Pam and I have been married for 49 years, on June 1st, 2023, as I write these reflections. It has been a great ride and it all started with a kiss along a river bank with the sun going down in the twilight of suspended time.

Our lives became much more complex after that kiss; I went off to Scotland to the Southern General in Glasgow for a 3-month neurosurgical elective that had been arranged by Dr. Charles Drake. It was an exciting time being there during the initial development of the Glasgow Coma Scale. Studying with Sir Graham Teasdale and Professor Bryan J. Jennet the creators of the Scale was indeed an honour. Pam, now working as a nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital visited over Christmas, internship followed at Victoria Hospital in London, Ontario and we got married in June of 1974. Neurosurgical residency commenced, we were soon expecting our first child, Lana and off to Sweden for a few years, completing a PhD in biochemistry at the University of Uppsala in 1979. Had a great supervisor Professor Karl Arfors, a scientist, artist, and gourmet cook who mentored me well in two out of his three areas of expertise. Sweden was a time filled with new friends that have lasted a lifetime

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and shaped my career. We arrived with one child, and I defended my PhD with a two-year-old and a 2-week-old Adrian, watching from the stands at the University of Uppsala. Neurosurgical exams and in the beginning of 1981 I took up a position as an assistant professor in the Department of Clinical Neurological Sciences at Western. For the next 20 years both Pam and I focused our efforts on the care for adult and pediatric patients with brain tumors in Southwestern Ontario, Nationally and Internationally. Victoria Hospital was truly an exciting place to work and do research with Drs. Charlie Bolton, John Brown and Bryan Young just some of the many neurologists who I was honored to work with. Special thanks to Dr. Bolton for his steadfast support and helping with the initial funding to start up my lab and to Drs Hugh Barr and Lorne Amacher for not only teaching me neurosurgery but also encouraging and helping me do my research. Dr. Amacher and I shared the pediatric neurosurgery initially in OR 3 at Victoria Hospital and I took on this role when the Children's Hospital moved to the new campus. My clinics, run by Pam, were always filled with adults and kids were behind the Children's Hospital Emergency Department. At least we were always close to the neurosurgical action. I started the Brain Research Laboratory at Victoria Hospital and continued my interest in the biology and treatment of brain tumors for the rest of my career training a talented series of researchers in the field.

After coming back from Sweden Pam and I soon had a third child, Christian. Life was busy. We both also realized that there was a need for more education and research in the area of brain tumors. Pam, Steve Northey, who had lost his daughter to a brain tumour and myself co-founded the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada in 1982. Our three kids got involved helping with fund raisers, fashion shows and conferences. This organization has become a dynamic cross Canada combination of volunteers and professionals fostering excellence in brain tumour patient care, patient support and research funding. All three of us are indeed very proud of the work that this organization has and continues to accomplish over the last 40 years.

In 2000 Pam and I moved to Montreal where I took up the position of Director of the new Brain Tumour Research Centre at the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital. As the William Feindel Professor of Neuro-Oncology at McGill I was involved in helping to create an environment focused on excellence in research and neurosurgical patient care. Pam, always involved, ran my office while volunteering at a food bank.

One of the teachers who had a significant influence on me was Dr. Jaroslav Havelka who was Head of Psychology at King's College at Western University in London. I always had plans to implement his idea of a useful and productive life. The first 30 years "to learn what you wanted to do", the "next 30 to do so" and the next chapter to enjoy family and life more. Three married children with 10 grand kids now focused Pam and my decision making. So, in 2012 I retired from my neurosurgical practice and became the William Feindel Professor Emeritus in Neuro-Oncology and a Professor in the Department of the Social Studies of

Medicine at McGill. I still direct the Neurosurgery Simulation and Artificial Intelligence Learning Centre at McGill University, and my research is focused on developing and accessing the educational role of virtual reality surgical simulation and artificial intelligence working to develop the "intelligent Operating Room" of the future.

To keep myself grounded in the world of patients and research I developed an interest in the History of Medicine with a particular focus on Leonardo da Vinci and renaissance medicine. I have a large private collection of materials related to Leonardo da Vinci. Using this material, I have curated a number of exhibitions related to Leonardo's art and anatomical interests. Two drawings from my collection, based on Leonardo's *visi mostruosi* (grotesque faces), were included in the Arcimboldo Exhibition at the Palazzo Barberini in Rome from October 19th, 2017 to February 11th 2018. This has begun to convince Pam that the money and time I have spent acquiring my collection has not been complete madness.



A little Leonardo magic

Being the Honorary Osler Librarian, Chairperson of the Standing Committee and member of the Board of Curators of the Osler Library of the History of Medicine at McGill has allowed me to continue to have increasing contact with medical students. We have had the honour of endowing the Pam and Rolando Del Maestro Family William Osler Medical Student Essay Awards offered by the Osler Library of the History of Medicine in 2015. This award helps McGill medical students explore the historical, social, ethical, and humanistic side of medicine. Their investigations to unravel the past will hopefully lead to a further understanding of the role that medicine has and will continue to play in the enhancement of the human condition. In 2017 we endowed The Pam and Rolando Del Maestro Family Undergraduate Student Research Competition Awards at the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. This award promotes scientific innovation among Canadian university and college undergraduate students in the field of brain tumour research and provides them with the opportunity to present their novel approaches and/or ideas to a panel of scientists, professionals and other interested individuals.

Writing these words has allowed me to reflect on the great opportunity Canada has given me, a poor Italian immigrant kid, whose family came to Canada after the war. I hope I have used this opportunity wisely.

Pam and I wish for all our friends, their family and friends, Spock's important wish. 'Live long and prosper'. Our lives have been blessed and we indeed have prospered, and the best part may be still to come, and it all started with a kiss.



Respectfully submitted

Rolando Del Maestro

Annual Business Meeting

American Osler Society Annual Meeting
May 24, 2023

Dr. Boes called the meeting to order.

A moment of silence was held for members who died in the previous year: Fred Rogers

Annual business meeting minutes from April 13, 2022, as published in *The Oslerian* were approved.

Secretary's report – David Burkholder

There are 230 members (113 fellow, 23 active, 49 student, 43 emeritus, and 2 honorary). This represents an increase to 38 members compared to 2022.

There are 123 registered for this year's meeting. This includes 21 students and 10 Osler Club of London members. Last year's meeting had 91 in-person registered attendees and 40 virtual.

Treasurer's report – Drew Nadell

Assets of the society are sound. Market volatility in the prior year has impacted the Society as may be anticipated, but financially we remain in good shape. Consensus review of the available investment and cash accounts at the Board of Governors meeting agreed with the financial health of the Society.

Finance Committee Report – Tino Bernadett (absent)

Deferred in Dr. Bernadett's absence to Dr. Nadell.

The Oslerian editor's report – Michael Malloy (in absentia, delivered by Joan Richardson)

Dr. Malloy sends his regrets for not being able to be at the present meeting, and his thanks for those that submit material for *The Oslerian*. He will be selecting a co-editor to help in the near future.

Nominating Committee Report – Bob Mennel

The selection of second vice president (Jim Wright), Secretary (Gaby Frank) and new members-at-large (Alice Rhoton-Vlasak, Bruce Hoekstra, and David Wolf) were reviewed by Dr. Mennel.

Membership Committee Report – Joan Richardson

Dr. Richardson reviewed the changes approved at last year's business meeting, including new bylaws for

new active members and the new category of Fellow. All new members are listed below. Those present at the meeting were introduced in person.

Active membership applications: (25) Elizabeth Cozine, Jeremy Cutsforth-Gregory, David Darrow, Burke Dial, Laurette Geldenhuys, Daniel Goodenberger, Guillaume Lamotte, Rafael Jimenz, R. Bruce Kelly, Peter Kernahan, John Looney, Robert Mamlok, Jeremy Norman, Premal Patel, William Patton, Ashley Paul, Tim Pelkowski, Vijay Ramanan, Jarrett Richardson, Rachel Salas, Richard Silver, Erik St. Louis, Charles Wiener, Eelco Wijdicks, Zbigniew Wojcinski

Fellow membership applications: (5) Lemuel Aigbivalu, Jeffrey Fisher, Graham Kyle, Robert Orford, Dwight Wolf

Membership through Bean Award: (3) Saman Arfaie, Geoffrey Bocobo, Jasmine Jones

Student membership applications: (18) Samantha Achauer, Pranati Ahuja, Samuel Borer, Maggie Chen, Sarit Dhar, Ali Fazlollahi, Varesh Gorabi, Timm Heinbokel, Andrew Kelley, Walker Magrath, Thomas McMaster, Emily Rodriguez, Sonal Sharda, Victoria Starnes, Briana Syed, Bibiana Toro Figueira, Leonard Wang, Lauren Westcott

Program Committee Report – Rolando Del Maestro

There were 109 abstracts submitted, with approximately half being from students (medical, graduate, and post-graduate) and 13 that presented at this conference. In an effort to encourage student attendance next year's meeting will run from Saturday to Monday so there is better ability for them to travel and attend over the weekend. There will also be prizes for the top 3 student presentations (which will start with this year's meeting). Third, there will also be new travel grants of \$500 each for the top 10 rated student abstracts, and another 2 for resident abstracts.

William B. Bean Student Research Award Committee Report – John "Skip" Harris

Dr. Harris gave background on the Bean Award, which has been in existence for about 40 years. Over the past 5 years we have received applications from students at 56 schools in the US and Canada, representing 27% of medical schools in those countries. This year there were 27 applications from 22 schools. Eleven met last year's funding threshold, showing

how strong these applications have become. Five will be funded for the coming year.

Historian-Archivist’s Report – Herbert Swick

Many materials have been housed by Mrs. Ziemer due to the Osler Library fire. With the re-opening of the Library those materials have been transferred to the Library. Archival updates have been approved by the Board at the meeting on May 21, and it is anticipated that the archives will be the most up-to-date that it has been in the past 12 years.

Publications and Media Activities Committee Report – Pete Travers (absent)

A new website vendor is in place and it is anticipated this will provide much better service and maintenance.

The AskOsleriana database is now being maintained by Dokmee, allowing for more advanced searches and multiple users searching at a single time.

A new process for online applications is underway and

a vendor has been chosen.

President’s Report – Christopher Boes

The main focus of this year has been making the Society more inclusive, which was a continuance of Dr. Jones’ prior presidency. Medical students were added to committees which make a significant difference in committee work. A new podcast is headed by Rob Stone. A blog and social media presence is maintained by student members.

Old Business

No additional old business was reviewed.

New Business

Future meetings and dates reviewed:

Kansas City, Missouri (May 3-6, 2024)

Pasadena, California 2025 (dates to be determined)

Committee appointments for 2023-2024:

(Table Below)

COMMITTEE	CURRENT CHAIR	CURRENT MEMBERS	NEW CHAIR	ROTATES OFF	NEW MEMBERS
Bean Award	J. Harris	R. Colgan, S. Moss, T. Frank	J. Harris	R. Colgan	K. Klaas
McGovern Award*	B. Mennel	M. Jones, B. Mennel	C. Boes	M. Molina	None
Lifetime Achievement Award	L. Drevlow	J. Howell, F. Neelon	L. Drevlow	None	H. Swick
Nominating*	B. Mennel	M. Jones	C. Boes	M. Molina	None
Finance	F. Bernadett	F. Bernadett, A. Nadell, M. Stone	F. Bernadett	A. Nadell	M. Molina
History & Archives Committee	H. Swick	R. Del Maestro, M. Hague-Yearl, D. Kratz, R. Stone	No change	None	S. Arfaie, L. Wang
Membership#	J. Richardson	D. Burkholder, S. Patel, J. Young	J. Wright	D. Burkholder, J. Richardson, J. Young	TBD
Media & Technology Committee	P. Travers	G. Frank, J. Klaas, M. Malloy	No change	G. Huston	M. Abdalla, J. Crevero, M. Stanley,
Annual Meeting† – Program Committee	R. Del Maestro	J. Bullock, C. Crenner, R. Jones, J. Richardson	J. Richardson	J. Bullock, C. Crenner, R. Del Maestro, R. Jones, J. Richardson	J. Wright, TBD
Annual Meeting – Local Arrangements Committee	S. Peart	C. Boes, D. Burkholder (Executive Committee liaison), C. Partin	C. Crenner	S. Peart, C. Boes, D. Burkholder, C. Partin	TBD

* Chaired by the most recent living Past President and include the 3 most recent living Past Presidents

Chaired by the Second Vice-President

† Chaired by the First Vice-President

YOUNG OSLERIAN VIEWS

Routine and Regular aren't Ruts They're Inroads

By Michael Stanley
Co-Editor Young Oslerian Section

So much of our life is either a big-box store or mail-order approach. Mom and Pop were our neighbors. They appreciated in both senses of the word—*noticing and valuing*. Today the consumer, whether of hats or healthcare, is being not appreciated but calculated by algorithms as 1s & 0s that convert to dollars & cents. While as a consumer this valuation frustrates, we might neglect our own estimation of those who serve has also changed (think of the mistreatment of flight attendants, drive-through workers, and the high-schooler still willing to work the cash register). We see the name on the door—a corporate one—and we treat the person in front of us as representative of that disembodied corporation. Mom and Pop may not own the store outright, maybe just a piece of its franchise, or maybe not at all—but if we're losing main street we don't have to lose our close countertop relationships that used transcend the transactional in even the most mundane of exchanges. Paying attention is a small price to pay.

I had such an up-ending change in perspective at the big-box coffee shop in my neighborhood. My morning walk to work is stop at the same place at same time. One of three women or one guy at the cash register says, "Good morning, what would you like?" Sometimes one of the ladies calls me, "Honey," and I like that. Then I give the same reply, "Greetings! Can I have two maple-frosted donuts and a small iced-coffee, cream—no sugar?" Then I add a please, because I feel self-conscious. It comes to exactly \$6.17 every time.

I did not beat the rush the other day, and everyone was hustling along as fast as they could. There was a new girl at the counter. "Can I help you?" she said. I started in, but one of the other patrons interrupted, berating the new girl for the wait. He had ordered online and was upset he couldn't just walk in and walk out. That is what most of us do in life. The girl pressed a few buttons on the cashier's pad, appeased the other patron, then returned to finish my order. Today it came to \$5.75.

"That's unusual," I thought. She handed me the bag of donuts. Two maple-frosted. I thought maybe I earned enough for a discount. But as the wait dragged on and on, I looked at the menu board, and it became clear it was probably a hot-coffee that got di-

aled in. I didn't really want to interrupt because there were already many people at the edge of the counter complaining. This was a franchise. This was supposed to run like a machine. And we squeeze the people at the front as if they were just coffee presses. "Hot coffee's fine," I thought, even though I didn't really feel it was. But as I was absentmindedly staring at one of the regular employees I'd ordered from for months, she caught me looking at her, and smiled. That's when I realized she noticed me. Turning around, she grabbed a plastic cup—not a paper cup.

"Here, Honey," she said, sliding the iced-coffee across the counter.

I don't work in an office with pictures of family or my degrees—no signs of my life. I get assigned to some arbitrary consultation room, usually without a window, but always with a computer. And as I talk with patients I'm encouraged to type into a template. It's big-box store medicine. But in the afternoon I noticed my patient was someone I'd seen everyday in the neighborhood. I turned away from the computer, deleted the template, really looked at her, and said with a grin, "I know you, don't I?"

"Sure thing, Honey." We both laughed.

If we pay attention to each other, routine and regular are no longer ruts but in-roads toward that little local love called community.

Paying Homage to Sir William Osler

By Pooja Agrawal

Sir William Osler is known to have said, "The whole art of medicine is in observation." He was a strong proponent of bringing medical students out of the classroom and into the patient's room, stating, "Let not your concepts of the manifestations of disease come from words heard in the lecture room or read from the book... Learn to see, learn to hear, learn to feel, learn to smell, and know that by practice alone can you become expert." This principle continues to be important in the modern-day practice of medicine. Despite the introduction of new technologies and treatments, I believe the heart of medicine lies in the ability of the physician to listen more than speak. Even in the present day, Osler would agree that each of our patients is telling us a story, it is up to us, as medical students, and physicians, to listen. While teaching medical students, Osler encouraged them to,

"care more particularly for the individual patient than for the special features of the disease...Nothing will sustain you more potently in

YOUNG OSLERIAN VIEWS

your humdrum routine, as perhaps it may be thought, than the power to recognize the true poetry of life—the poetry of the common place, of the ordinary man, of the plain, toilworn woman, with their loves and their joys, their sorrows and their griefs.”

I have carried these principles with me throughout my endeavors as a medical student. While volunteering at the Luke Society, a free clinic in Galveston, I routinely encounter patients with many unique stories and often try to find a way to connect to each person, providing words filled with strength and encouragement. I have learned that when I put forth a true effort in establishing a relationship with the patient, I am able to both learn and contribute more to their overall well-being. Recently, I met a patient who had signed up for a free mammogram at the clinic but did not come to her appointment. After spending some time with her, I learned that she had never received a mammogram before and was afraid to undergo the scan. Taking the time to understand her personal obstacles allowed me to better serve her, and we worked together to eliminate some of her apprehensions. Through volunteering at the clinic, I have learned that patients are much more than room numbers, check boxes, or diseases to be treated, they are first and foremost people with a lifetime of experiences, emotions, and intricate narratives. Patients are, as Osler would say, “a lesson in much more than the malady from which they suffer.”

Osler was also known to be a proponent of scholarly activity to supplement medical education. He continuously published academic papers throughout his career stating, “When you have accomplished a piece of research...do not be satisfied with a verbal communication...publish it.” Throughout my medical training, I have strived to engage in research to educate myself and others so that we may better serve our patients. This scholarly activity has repeatedly proven to be useful in terms of understanding more about the origins of disease, why certain pathologies present in concordance with each other, and how illnesses affect patients. Osler wrote,

“A devotion to science, a saturation with its spirit, will give you that most precious of all faculties—a sane, cool reason which enables you to sift the true from the false in life and at the same time keeps you in the van of progress.”

In accordance with these views, regardless of the research topic that I have explored or published, I have realized that at the root of scholarly work is a desire to improve upon what is known so that it may benefit others in the future. For example, while working on a manuscript examining factors associated with reduced levels

of physical activity, I learned that the neighborhood environment (feeling safe, the presence of street lighting, sidewalks) can significantly contribute to a person’s ability to exercise. Not soon after publishing this manuscript, I met a middle-aged woman during my family medicine rotation who had multiple health issues such as hypertension, obesity, and diabetes. She had been counseled to adhere to an exercise regime that involved walking in her neighborhood for 30 minutes each day. When she returned to clinic the following month, however, she had logged less than 10 minutes of exercise per week. When I asked her why this was the case, she quietly mentioned that her neighborhood did not have sidewalks and was not safe to walk in. The exercise regime that she had been recommended was unsuitable for her, but it had been too embarrassing for her to admit that she lived in a poor area. I was surprised to discover that the research I had been engaging in was immediately applicable to the patients I was seeing in clinic and was subsequently able to use what I had learned to develop a personalized treatment plan for the patient. This story always reminds me to give people the benefit of doubt. Had I assumed that the woman simply did not want to exercise, I would not have uncovered the underlying issue. She did not have a lack of motivation, but a lack of means to adhere to the health advice she had received. Many times, poor life choices may be due to a lack of resources or knowledge. Osler states, “To serve the art of medicine as it should be served, one must love his fellow man.” I think this is where we can truly make a difference as health care providers, not to judge or berate but to problem solve and work with our patients to find individualized approaches/interventions that complement their lifestyles and needs.

Over his lifetime, Osler acquired a collection of over 8,000 books and gave certain people access to his collection through latchkeys. Even though I am not lucky enough to have the latchkey to Osler’s library, I think I possess something that is equally as rewarding. My patient is my latchkey. As I work towards my goal of a career in academic medicine, the patients I meet will unlock an endless source of knowledge. I hope that I can repay this favor by learning as much as I can from them, but more importantly, by simply listening and observing.

Pooja Agrawal is a fourth year student at the University of Texas Medical Branch who will be graduating on June 3, 2023 and pursuing a Diagnostic Radiology residency at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston following a transitional year. This essay won an award from the John P. McGovern Academy of Oslerian Medicine as one of the best essays contributed to the Practice of Medicine Year 4 course.

MEDICAL HUMANITIES



Colonel Robert J.T. Joy (1929–2019) during the springtime of his career in the U.S. Army; Joy with AOS member and onetime president Peter D. Olch (1930–1991) and Dale C. Smith circa 1982, as founding members of the Section of Medical History at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences; Joy contemplating in the Great Quadrangle (“Tom Quad”) at Christ Church, Oxford, during the 1994 joint meeting of the American Osler Society and the Osler Club of London.

Journal of an Oslerian

An Ode to Joy

Few AOS members have been more prolific or influential in the history of medicine than Robert J.T. (Bob) Joy, who died on 30 April 2019 at the age of ninety. He was an infrequent presence at AOS meetings, which probably explains the absence (to my knowledge) of a previous memorial in *The Oslerian*. How many current AOS members even know of him?

To continue: How many people can you name who received both the William Osler Medal *and* the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association for the History of Medicine? How many people can you name who almost singlehandedly brought credibility to an entire subspecialty of the history of medicine? How many people do you know with Wikipedia entries running to 22 pages?

Bob Joy accomplished all this while spending his entire career in the U.S. Army, beginning with an ROTC scholarship to Yale University School of Medicine. With a classmate, he rejuvenated the dormant Nathan Smith Club and volunteered to give the first paper for discussion and criticism. The club prospered and the paper evolved into the winning essay for the William Osler Medal contest. The history of medicine remained a common thread in a career that included practice, teaching, research, administration, and a pioneering role in the Uniformed Services University (USUHS) of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland.

Bob trained at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, served a stint as surgeon to a tank battalion, and spent time at Fort Knox as a cardiologist and director of

the Environmental Division of the U.S. Army Medical Research Laboratory there. In 1963 he became commander of the U.S. Army Medical Research Team in Vietnam, where he focused especially on malaria and combat-induced neuroendocrine stress. In 1973, he became deputy director of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, where he took on problems related to racial tension and substance abuse from the Vietnam Era. He was considering retirement from the Army when he learned of plans to form the USUHS to prepare young people for health-related careers in the uniformed services.

Like attracts like, and I was not surprised to learn that Bob’s accomplice at USUHS was none other than Jay P. Sanford (1928–1996). Jay, like Bob, was a force of nature who seemingly knew everything about everything and who was revered by young people in his field (infectious diseases). Bob and Jay had been friends since their early days at Walter Reed.

The story goes that they met one evening—some say in a bar in Silver Spring, Maryland, others say in a room above a CVS Pharmacy in Bethesda—and sketched out preliminary plans (possibly on a napkin) for the curriculum. Jay became the founding dean and Bob became chair (or commandant) of the Department of Military Science. The first-year curriculum featured no fewer than 33 hours of lectures on the history of medicine. Bob was the students’ perennial choice for best teacher and the lecture room now bears his name.

Bob attempted to retire once more, but, in 1981, Sanford offered him the position of chair of a new Section of Medical History. Bob built up the department while becoming a national presence in the history of medicine. He served as editor of the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* (1982–1987), lectured throughout the U.S. and on four continents, and

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(Continued from page 8)

developed an Army Fellowship in Military History. According to Robert A. Doughty (b. 1943), former chair of history at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, “No one else contributed as much as he [Bob Joy] to our understanding of military medicine and its history.”

My three interactions with Bob Joy were brief but meaningful. I sat spellbound through a named lecture-ship and felt the pulsations of Napoleon’s legions marching through Europe with Baron Dominique Jean Larrey (1766–1842). I walked into a London pub with Jim Young and felt like one of his boys when Bob hollered from a corner, “Come over here, candy-asses!” In the Wellcome Library, I expressed the futility of adding yet another book to the stacks. I still feel Bob’s rejoinder: “Consider it your brick in the wall of human progress.”

Bob Joy was a golden brick indeed.

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Introduction to Poem:

Nightmare

By Briana Syed

Sir William Osler, the father of modern medicine, revolutionized perspectives on the essentiality of bedside manner and the primacy of the patient. A conscientious devotee to the clinical aspect of patient care, he spent significant time at the bedside, and observed patients and physicians as they engaged in the process of medical care. When I was thirteen, I lost my father, a nurse, to medical malpractice. He underwent a successful balloon angioplasty and received a stent in the LAD. During his overnight observation in the hospital, however, his stent collapsed, and set off his vital sign monitor. The medical care team attributed the alerts to a faulty monitor, and he sat alone in his armchair, deprived of oxygen, for 20 painstaking minutes until they reached his bedside. By this time, it was far too late. Ironically, the healthcare career which my father so loved took his own life. The full quote written by Sir William Osler that provided the inspiration for my poem is “No dreams, no visions, no delicious fantasies, no castles in the air, with which, as the old song so truly says, ‘hearts are broken, heads are turned.’” Sir William Osler conveyed a disciplined scientific approach to patient care that incorporated a deep humanism and intellect, and prioritized the presence of mind under all circumstances, calmness amid storm, clearness of judgment in moments of grave peril.

As a future physician myself, Osler’s philosophy is nothing short of gripping and soul shattering, because it exposes the practical realities and hard truths of medicine— a simple slip in judgment brought irreparable pain and damage to my family’s heart. My poem is a vulnerable exposé of the human experience of healthcare. I chose to write a viator poem, a form that reverberates the author’s tone and intensifies meaning. Interestingly, this form was invented by the renowned Robin Skelton, a Canadian poet born in the United Kingdom, exactly opposite to that of Sir William Osler himself, a British philosopher born in Canada. I hope that this poem serves as a reminder that the line between life and death is drawn by the tender hands of the provider. In my own career as an MD/MPH, I will tenaciously prioritize the patient, emphasize bedside manner, and advocate for opportunities to improve.



POETRY CORNER

Nightmare

By Briana Syed



No dreams, no visions, no delicious fantasies, no castles
in the air

My father took his last breath

Sitting alone

In a hospital armchair.

A heartbroken young child, I thought to myself

No dreams, no visions, no delicious fantasies, no castles
in the air.

How could a modern medical system

Be so blind and unfair.

His vital sign monitor blaring, pleading for care.

His blood flow withered and slowed.

No dreams, no visions, no delicious fantasies, no castles
in the air,

Just a ticking clock and a small little prayer.

Years of legal proceedings and lawsuits,

Where was the healthcare?

No happy ending, just my nightmare to share-

No dreams, no visions, no delicious fantasies, no castles
in the air.

Briana Syed is a 2nd year medical student at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas. She submitted this poem for a Medallion Award.

Memories of London

Reflections on the 53rd Annual American Osler Society Meeting in London

By Rob Stone

The 53rd annual meeting of the American Osler Society held in London from May 21st to May 24th, 2023, was a wonderful gathering of medical professionals, researchers, and students dedicated to exploring the diverse facets of medicine. Over the course of three days, the meeting showcased 51 presentations that delved into a wide array of compelling topics, ranging from the pursuit of truth in medicine to the interplay between art, prose, and the practice of medicine. Notably, the event also celebrated the rich British and Canadian connections within the Osler community, providing a global perspective on the advancements and challenges faced by the medical profession.

The meeting was a melting pot of ideas, with presentations covering a broad range of subjects. Participants engaged in discussions on topics such as the search for the Art of Medicine, emphasizing the humanistic elements of healthcare, and the exploration of beauty in art and prose, underlining the connection between artistic expression and healing. These sessions provided valuable insights into the significance of empathy, compassion, and effective communication in the practice of medicine.

Life and Ethics, an integral part of medical practice, were also discussed extensively. Presenters explored the ethical dilemmas faced by healthcare professionals and sought to provide thoughtful approaches and solutions to complex issues. The discussions served as a reminder of the critical role ethics plays in guiding medical decision-making and highlighted the need for ongoing dialogue and ethical reflection within the medical community.

Additionally, President Christopher Boes delivered his insightful and thought-provoking presidential address at the prestigious Royal College of Physicians. His speech centered on the theme “History teaches humility”.

One of the many highlights of the meeting was the presentations by medical students. These emerging voices brought fresh perspectives, innovative research, and an enthusiasm that invigorated the entire group.

The 53rd Annual American Osler Society meeting in London proved to be a fantastic event that united medical professionals, faculty, and students from across the globe. The presentations and discussions encapsulated the core principles of the Osler Society, emphasizing the importance of truth, art, beauty, and ethics in the practice of medicine. The inclusion of British and Canadian connections further reinforced the collaborative and global nature of medical advancements. Moreover, the involvement of medical students provided a glimpse into the future of medicine, instilling optimism and excitement for what lies ahead. The meeting served as a reminder of the enduring legacy of Sir William Osler and his vision for a compassionate, humanistic, and intellectually rigorous medical profession. By embracing the diverse facets of medicine, the international Osler community continues to shape the future of healthcare, inspiring generations of medical professionals to strive for excellence, empathy, and lifelong learning.

Checkout this video:

<https://vimeo.com/834849246/9d4d8583d4?share=copy>



Memories of London

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AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY

Looking Forward to Kansas City, MO

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Save the dates of May 3-6, 2024 for the AOS meeting in Kansas City, Missouri.

New Fellows



Lemuel Aigbivbalu is a Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Texas Medical Branch and Division Director of Hospital Medicine. He is an Oslerian Faculty Scholar in the John P. McGovern Academy of Oslerian Medicine. He is a major proponent of doing the day's work well and not worrying about tomorrow.



Jeffrey Fisher is a cardiologist with appointment as Clinical Professor of Medicine at Cornell in New York City. He received his M.D. from Albert Einstein and did a Fellowship in Cardiology at Hopkins. He is a student of medical history and has just completed a manuscript on Osler which he will be submitting shortly for publication.



Graham Kyle is an ophthalmologist now retired from clinical practice in the United Kingdom with a deep interest in the history of medicine and ethics. He has served as the President of the Osler Club of London (2019-2021). As such he has enjoyed the interaction with fellow members and is hopeful that membership in the AOS will increase the scope of such interactions.



Dwight Wolf is Professor and Vice Chair of Psychiatry at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. He is an Emeritus Osler Scholar in the John P. McGovern Academy of Oslerian Medicine. He is a creative musician integrating music with medicine and the humanities.

Introductions to New Fellows will continue in the August Edition of the Oslerian Newsletter.



The AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY exists to bring together members of the medical and allied professions, who by common inspiration are dedicated to memorialize and perpetuate the just and charitable life, the intellectual resourcefulness, and the ethical example of Sir William Osler, who lived from 1849 to 1919. The OSLERIAN is published quarterly.

Call for Abstracts for AOS 2024 Annual Meeting: More information will follow on the particulars for abstract submission for the 2024 Kansas City meeting in subsequent editions of the *Oslerian Newsletter*. Tentative deadline for submission is November 15, 2023.

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AOS Members — Please forward to the editor information worth sharing with