

Departmental Acknowledgement

**“I never said most of the things I said”
Yogi Berra**

Hi Everyone,

Tonight, I will have the pleasure of basking in the reflected glow at the Pediatric Chairs of Canada (PCC) Academic Leadership Awards Dinner where two members of our community will be receiving one of the Annual awards. Thus this week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to **Ron Gottesman** for his receipt of the PCC's 2015 Clinician Educator Award and to **Constantin Polychronakos** for his receipt of the PCC's 2015 Clinician Investigator Award.

This is the ninth year that the PCC has given out these Awards in academic leadership (Clinician-Practitioner is the third category). It is a rather remarkable commentary on our Department to note that our members have received such awards on seven occasions (Ron and Constantin join the late Wendy MacDonald, Charles Sriver, Michael Kramer, Emmett Francoeur, and Saleem Razack in being so honoured). This is more than any other centre and represents slightly more than a quarter of the awards thus far given (please note that there are 17 academic pediatric centres in Canada; as I say often we punch well above our weight). And I get the feeling that there is more to come, as I struggle each year with deciding just who to nominate amongst a plethora of deserving Department members.

I have decided to reproduce my letters of nomination for Ron and Constantin so we can all understand the values and achievement they represent.

Dr Ron Gottesman's nomination letter:

As a clinician, Ron has practiced exclusively in the demanding and multi-faceted sector of pediatrics that is critical care medicine. Ron was among the first Canadian pediatricians to have formal Fellowship training in this field which he undertook at USC. Upon his return to Montreal and McGill, circumstances compelled him at a very early stage in his career to take on a major leadership position as Director of Pediatric Critical Care Medicine both within our Department and institution (Montreal Children's Hospital). For 24 years Ron diligently served in this position continually advocating for, and successfully implementing, changes that have steadily improved patient care and improved operational efficiencies. In this position, Ron demonstrated a continual ability to work with all sectors and disciplines of the hospital providing relevant services to the critically ill pediatric population. He has only just recently stepped down from this demanding administrative position.

Through his clinical work in our PICU, Ron has always fostered educational excellence. Formally, he has served as the Residency Education Coordinator and the Fellowship Training Director for Pediatric Critical Care Medicine at McGill. Remarkably slightly more than 50 pediatric critical care fellows have trained under Ron's careful and nurturing tutelage. The vast majority have not surprisingly modeled themselves after Ron and have continued their careers as intensivists with a passion and commitment to education. His graduates read like a 'who's who' of Canadian intensivists. Internationally, Ron's progeny populate the PICUs of the Gulf states. He has also been involved as an Osler fellow with undergraduate medical students imparting the important intangibles of physicianship that is woven into his DNA. Ron's personal educational excellence is well-recognized locally. He has received the Paige and Bernard Kaplan Award for teaching from our residents. He was selected to the prestigious and exclusive Faculty Honor Roll for Educational Excellence. He has been the designated McGill nominee and recipient of the Certificate of Merit in Medical Education from the Canadian

Association of Medical Education. He has also been a recipient of the Royal Bank of Canada Teaching and Learning Innovation Award.

While there is no doubt about Ron's educational excellence, those meriting the PCC Award have demonstrated exceptional leadership in this domain. Ron has done so in two vital and enduring aspects that merits a 'legacy' designation. The first concerns his pioneering work with the Royal College to enable specialty designation in Critical Care Medicine. Ron was the pediatric point person for over a decade on the Nucleus Committee whose work formulated training requirements, curricula, expected competencies and formal objective assessments thereof. In essence, through this considerable educational effort, Ron can indeed be considered the 'Founding Father' of Canadian Pediatric Critical Care Medicine. The high esteem he is held by his peers in this effort is manifested by his selection as Chair of the Royal College's Critical Care Medicine Specialty Committee, which is a singular honor for someone from the pediatric side of the ledger in any field that also includes the invariably more numerous adult colleagues.

The second area meriting Leadership designation for Ron is his remarkable pioneering and enduring foray into simulation education. As an intensivist, Ron is naturally a technophile at ease with computers, bells and whistles. Ron was among the very first Canadians to realize the potential of simulation education to provide a mechanism for learning and improvement. He quickly introduced it into educational efforts in the PICU to improve learners' competencies and facilitate the highest form of learning which is self-reflection. He was among the original members of McGill's Simulation Centre ensuring both a pediatric presence and voice in its operations and management. Over the years, Ron has widened the thrust of Simulation Education to go well beyond the simply technical to include teams and vital competencies related to physicianship, professionalism and even the actual selection of learners for programs. Ron's excellence in this domain is also widely recognized with multiple national and international presentations and speaking invitations. He was also selected to participate in a multi-year International Medical Educators Exchange Program (Sweden, UK, Netherlands and Canada) focused on simulation. He served for a time as Director of the McGill's Simulation Centre. Finally the next career challenge he has taken on is to extend our University's expertise to selected international sites to establish their own high-quality simulation medical education programs. Throughout his efforts in simulation education, Ron has worked to measure that it did indeed make a difference in learner outcomes. Through his efforts, Ron has leveraged nationally and internationally manifold his local impact on education to improve that most important of variables: the health outcomes of the patients we take care of.

I cannot conclude without making one more observation to the Awards Committee that cannot be captured in his CV. As his Chair, I never cease to be amazed by the educational culture that Ron has imbued in his Division. I think what Ron takes greatest satisfaction is that he has shown that education matters and is important and must be woven into what we do. He has convinced many others of his conviction.

Dr. Constantin Polychronakos' nomination letter:

Dr. Polychronakos is currently a Professor (with Tenure) in the Department of Pediatrics at McGill University. He has completed fifteen years as Director of our Division of Pediatric Endocrinology. As a Division Director, he ably led his division to prominence in all domains of our academic mission: clinical service, outreach, education and research (basic and clinical). As Chair, I can attest to Constantin's selfless and steady attention to the continued professional development of his Division members and peers. He has replaced his leadership role as Division Director by taking an even more substantial position in our hospital-based research efforts as the leader for the Child Health and Human Development Program.

As a clinician, Constantin has been a longstanding devoted care provider to children with endocrinologic disorders, and in particular those with insulin dependent diabetes. It is Dr.

Polychronakos' clinical practice that has informed his remarkable scientific accomplishments and leadership. Constantin's investigative efforts have been focused at the bench on the elucidation of the genetic basis and mechanisms for diabetes mellitus. This has occurred within the context of a revolution in molecular biology that has seen the rapid introduction of new technologies and the quick dispatch to the dustbin of that which has been replaced. Throughout this revolution with its rapidly shifting floor, Dr. Polychronakos has stood firm in his quest.

Constantin has demonstrated an ability to adapt and integrate new technologies into his efforts, continually pushing the envelope of what we know, setting up the next step in our efforts towards further understanding. To a fellow investigator, this flexibility and adaptability is astonishing.

Dr. Polychronakos' journey of discovery has been supported by prior and current external funding support from a multitude of funding sources. All appear eager to back a "winner". External funding sources have included : CIHR, NIH, Genome Canada, Genome Quebec, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation and the Canadian Diabetes Association. His success is evident in currently over 125 peer-reviewed publications. A significant proportion of these are in high impact factor journals, including multiple senior author contributions to *Nature* and *Nature Genetics*. Constantin's leadership amongst his peers is evident by his Editor-in-Chief post since 2009 at the *Journal of Medical Genetics* (IF 6.4), a rare honor for a clinician-investigator.

Not surprisingly Dr. Polychronakos' track record of success has garnered both local and national awards. These include Awards for Research Excellence (2005) from our hospital foundation and salary support (2008-2013) as well as career recognition awards from the *Fondation de la recherche sur les maladies infantiles* (2008) and the Canadian Pediatric Society (2009). He was also honoured last year by induction as a Fellow into the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

Last year, Constantin was also inducted into the Royal Society of Canada. This is a singular honor. He joins Charles Scriver and Michael Kramer, both prior recipients of a PCC Leadership Award as members of the McGill Pediatric staff achieving this honor.

Also, not surprisingly, Dr. Polychronakos' success and his easy-going manner and approachability have attracted a steady stream of students and fellows. Close to 30 graduate students and fellows over the years have benefited from Dr. Polychronakos' guidance, expertise and mentorship, as an initial or subsequent step in their own individual pathway to success as child health researchers. A review of Dr. Polychronakos' CV reveals that with his involvement, his students and fellows were able to achieve their goals as witnessed by their successful publication of their own bench research while under his tutelage. For many, their years with Constantin were an essential catalyst for this own careers as independent investigators.

Please join me in congratulating Ron and Constantin on their terrific accomplishment and recognition from their peers.

Have a great weekend everyone.

Michael

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