

"We made too many wrong mistakes"
Yogi Berra

Hi Everyone,

I am amazed it's taken me so long to give a Departmental Acknowledgement to this week's honoree **Gary Pেকেles**.

Perhaps it's because Gary has been around so long and is such an integral part of the Children's community that his presence and contributions are taken for granted. If so, this would be a grave mistake as he is a vital and unique force within the hospital and Department.

Gary is a native Montrealer, who took a year to study political philosophy (so that explains it....his grasp of politics and its history is encyclopedic) at Hebrew University in Jerusalem while completing a First Class Honours degree in genetics at McGill. This was followed by medical school at Baylor Medical College in Houston, Texas. He then pursued the clinical segment of his specialty training in pediatrics in three separate institutions: Children's Memorial in Chicago, the Montreal Children's and finally, Sick Kids in Toronto. Once again, he paused during this segment of his educational path to complete a Master's degree in Epidemiology and Health at McGill as a prestigious Robert Wood Johnson scholar.

Gary's academic and hospital career has been spent at McGill and the MCH. He was amongst the first pediatric hospitalists and academic general pediatricians. He is presently an Associate Professor in the Department and an attending staff physician in the Division of General Pediatrics. His leadership and administrative contributions over the years are quite impressive both at a local and University level. He is a former pediatrics residency Program Director, Director of the McGill Baffin Program (1991-1997) and founding (and only) Director of our Northern and Native Child Health Program (1991-present). In this role, Gary has been at the forefront of vital health service delivery efforts to indigenous and remote communities that have been innovative and sustainable in their conceptualization that has really been impactful in child health. For this, he received the Hildes medal from the International Union for Circumpolar Health. This medal is given only every three years to an individual who has demonstrated excellence in clinical service, research or humanitarianism in Northern medicine and health. Gary has also served at length on major governing bodies of McGill (Senate, Board of Governors), MCH (CSCA), and MUHC (Board of Directors). He has always been available to give his sage and, at times, out-of-the-box advice on numerous hospital and departmental committees over the years that are too numerous to mention.

Gary has also done the walk locally in child health over the decades as a ward attending where he is known for his clinical acumen and unique teaching style. He does not shy from vigorous debate and always seeks the evidence, from learners and consultants, to back up testing and interventions. He has also done the walk globally participating in health projects in East (Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia) and West (Sierra Leone, Liberia) Africa as well as Asia (Vietnam).

Gary is indeed one amongst our staff whose breadth of contributions and experiences enrich our Department.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

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