

**"How can you think and hit at the same time?"**  
**Yogi Berra**

Hi Everyone,

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to **Kent Saylor** on the occasion of his being awarded this year's Haile T. Debas Prize from the Faculty of Medicine.

The Haile T. Debas prize was established in 2010 to promote equitable diversity at all levels in the Faculty of Medicine by recognizing a Faculty member who helps promote diversity, which could be by acting as a role model or mentor, or by implementing new approaches to increase under-represented minorities. Haile T. Debas is a McGill Alumnus recognized internationally for his pioneering contributions to academic medicine (he served as both Dean of Medicine and Chancellor at UCSF), as well as to global health.

I have pasted my nomination letter in support of Kent below to provide the rationale why he is so deserving of this particular prize.

Of Mohawk heritage, Kent did his undergraduate degree at Dartmouth and his medical degree of Stanford (1994). It is my understanding that he is among the initial cohort of Canadian First Nations physicians and the first such pediatrician. This was followed by pediatric residency training both at the University of Washington and at McGill. Since 2000, Kent has been an attending physician in our Division of General Pediatrics and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics. The bulk of his clinical activities takes place in the context of our Northern Program. Since arriving on staff, Kent has spent up to 12 weeks a year as a visiting pediatric specialist in the Cree villages along the James Bay and Hudson Bay coastline centered on Chisasibi. This activity regularly takes Kent away from family and home, and features demanding travel often in difficult climactic and physical conditions. In addition to his on-site visits, Kent in the remainder of the year provides valuable telephone support as a pediatric specialist to the isolated nursing stations and villages of this region and co-ordinates the all too frequent visits of children from this region to Montreal for tertiary medical care. If this was not enough, Kent provides valuable pediatric medical services to the Kahnawake, Kanasatake and Akwesasne Reserves in the Montreal and Cornwall region. Much of his time is spent providing preventative services in the schools of these local reserves where he frequently speaks on health topics.

Beyond providing direct health care services to our native vulnerable pediatric population, Kent is an advocate for systematic change in how health care is provided and delivered. For these efforts he was recognized as the inaugural recipient, through the Canadian Pediatric Society, of the Peter Henderson Bryce Award that was created by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. This Award in particular recognized Kent's innovative work in 'sustainable' advocacy by his work in creating a national Aboriginal health curricula for health professionals. This is especially evident at McGill where Kent is the Director of the Faculty of Medicine's Indigenous Health Curricula. Under his leadership, students in the 'new' MDCM curriculum receive teaching on issues pertaining to First Nations Health throughout the four years of medical school. Perhaps even more importantly, they are inculcated with relevant knowledge that will enable them to provide care that is culturally sensitive and respectful of native culture and traditions. Opportunities to directly experience health and disease in a native context are also provided to willing learners. His educational efforts in health care curricula have been instrumental in promoting the respect for diversity that is a predicate for our aspirations as a society to be just, fair and equitable.

One can well imagine that through his career choices, Kent has served as a role model to Native children and youth that they can aspire to higher education and a professional career. Through multiple efforts, Kent has actively sought to foster First Nations enrollment in medical school. He regularly speaks to prospective students in Kahnawake, the Explorer Camp and the Eagle Spirit High Performance Camp run by the First Peoples House at McGill. He has directly mentored three

First Nations students in the Faculty of Medicine. Through the PFMPNIQ, he is available to speak to all Indigenous applicants to the Faculty of Medicine. Finally, he is working with various partners to create a summer program for Indigenous high school youth to boost their science skills.

I am particularly proud to note that Kent is the third recipient of this prize from our Department in its short history, joining Saleem Razack and Loydie Majewska. Tangible proof that when it comes to diversity and social accountability, we don't just do the talk, but we also, more importantly, do the walk.

Have a great long weekend everyone!

Michael

Michael Shevell, MDCM, FRCPC, FCAHS  
Chairman, Department of Pediatrics  
Professor (with Tenure)  
Departments of Pediatrics and Neurology/Neurosurgery  
McGill University

Guyda Chair in Pediatrics

Pediatrician-in-Chief  
Montreal Children's Hospital/  
McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)

Follow Me on Twitter: @McGillPeds