**Reflective Piece**

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The 2021 Pam & Rolando Del Maestro Family William Osler Medical Student Essay Contest

Advised by Professor George Weisz, Department of Social Studies of Medicine

Writing the Osler Essay was not only more challenging than I expected, but also a lot more rewarding than I could have ever anticipated. I felt particularly grateful to be mentored by Dr. Weisz, this essay would not have been possible without his constructive and thoughtful feedback as well as the invaluable resources he provided me with.

When I started writing, I was at a loss of words as to how I would properly summarize the 1934 hospital strike. The strike was not a result of a mere incident, but a result of systemic racism; an ever-changing concept that is extremely difficult to define, and even harder to understand. It was challenging to address systemic oppression in medicine by analyzing only one story. There are so many ways racism manifests itself into the healthcare system, and it was overwhelming to focus on a single incident while attempting to describe how Montreal’s historical record of discrimination has shaped our present-day medical system. It felt unfair to not thoroughly address other racial groups that were being systemically oppressed in the same period as Dr. Rabinovitch, but with the help of Dr. Weisz, I did my best to cover as much as I possibly could in 3000 words!

Our culture has drawn an artificial line between art and science, but I think that medicine sits perfectly in the middle of this line. While STEM allows us to drive innovation through science alone, imagine how much more innovative medical students would be if the pool of knowledge from which we draw our ideas from is that much wider and deeper. Gaining this profound sense of appreciation can only arise from exploring the history, ethics, sociology, and humanities of health science. This profound sense of appreciation came from writing my submission for The Pam and Rolando Del Maestro Family William Osler Medical Student Essay Award. I would like to thank the Osler Library team for guiding me through this enlightening path of self-reflection.

This essay was my first experience conducting any sort of archival research. The accessibility to letters, newspaper articles, newsletters, photographs, and reports allowed me to precisely recount the past. I found it was remarkable how with the help of Dr. Mary Hague-Yearl at the Osler Library and Ms. Janice Rosen at the Canadian Jewish Archives, I managed to find exactly what I was looking for. I learned about many digital free resources and archives that are available to the public. Nevertheless, once I found what I was looking for, I realized just how much more was out there and it was hard to figure out when and where to stop. The world of archives really felt like opening a treasure chest, extremely difficult to navigate but lucky to find. I felt privileged to be able to find the gold; to access these “secret” documents that encompasses our city’s rich history and gain the required tools to educate myself and take responsibility to fight against all forms of discrimination. I truly enjoyed writing my essay and I feel as though I have grown as a writer, researcher, medical student and as a future physician.

Thank you,

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