

February 6, 2015

"Pair up in threes"  
Yogi Berra

Hi Everyone,

This week's Departmental Acknowledgement is tinged with sadness and personal regret as it will be given to **Dr. Mel Wise** who passed away on Wednesday.

I knew that Mel had gotten ill a couple of weeks ago and was planning to give the Acknowledgement to him today before I learned of his death. Hence my profound regret as he really should have read what his professional community and peers thought of him.

It seems like Mel has been a part of the fabric that is our hospital community forever, and indeed he started here just a few years after the MCH moved to its Tupper Street site, one we will be leaving in but a few short months. He is one of our clinical legends. Mel had the face, gentle mannerisms and an easy way with kids that you expect from someone in pediatrics. He was kind and patient with all whose paths he came across. He was an astute and knowledgeable physician. He had an air of personal modesty and instinctively knew what was the right thing to do. He had a most memorable laugh that resembled a low throated chuckle that seemed to go on forever. Indeed he had a great sense of humor and seemed to always be seeking the good and amusing that is in life. It is fitting that there is a Yogi Berra quote at the head of this Acknowledgement. He mentioned a few to me over the years.

He will be missed by us all.

I have repasted below the tribute written by Larry Lands that I distributed electronically yesterday. It provides a wonderful precis of a life well lived.

Dr. Melvin Wise epitomized what we have all strived for in our professional careers. He was thoughtful, measured, and generous with his time and knowledge.

Mel was born and raised in Southwestern Ontario, in the area now known as Brantford. He started at the Montreal Children's in the mid-1960's, having trained in the first Cystic Fibrosis clinic in Cleveland. Such a clinic was truly revolutionary for its time. CF care was in its infancy-encapsulated pancreatic enzymes weren't even available, and the concept of multi-disciplinary care was really novel.

Mel came to Montreal and began to work with Pierre Beaudry and Helen Brickman. Mel and Pierre assumed the care of CF patients and, with Helen, began offering Tuberculosis screening and care of children as an extension of the adult Tuberculosis program. Today, our CF clinic continues to be a major clinical and academic leader while our tuberculosis screening program served as a national model.

Many trainees supervised by Mel went on to have outstanding careers in health care. Lou Landau and Lynn Taussig both have had renowned research careers and have launched the careers of dozens of pediatric respirologists. Lou in Australia went on to become Chair of Pediatrics and Dean of Medicine at the University of Western Australia. Lynn expanded and developed the well-known Tuscon asthma cohort, and became CEO of National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Denver. Together, the two were the editors-in-chief of a leading text in pediatric respiratory medicine. Mel and Pierre recruited Michel Bureau, who went on to become Division Director, Dean of Sherbrooke, Director of the FRSQ (now FRQS), and a deputy minister of health. Allan Coates was another recruit of Pierre and Mel's, who served as Division Director at MCH and Sickkids, and produced many key papers and guidelines concerning the measurement of pulmonary function in children.

Mel served as a Vice-Dean for the McGill Faculty of Medicine. Mel's most compelling administrative contribution was the establishment of the Respiratory Division Practice Plan over 30 years ago. This plan has enabled the Division to grow and support academic activity, and enjoy an unmatched collegiality.

Earlier on in his career, Mel conducted clinical research, but realized his true passion was clinical care. While not pursuing an active research career, Mel's insightful comments at research rounds typically crystallized the issues and enhanced both the presenter's and audience's appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the data.

Mel was incredibly well read over a breadth of topics much beyond pediatric respiratory medicine; he truly served as the Division's library. But most importantly, he shared this knowledge with others in a quiet egalitarian manner. He took this thoughtful demeanor into the clinic, and provided exemplary care and compassion for his patients, often caring for the children of his former patients. He always provided a calm and reasoned voice that supported the Division through the challenges that it has faced.

The condolences of the entire Department go out to Mel's family.

Michael

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