

November 11, 2016

Better to pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age.

James Joyce

Hi Everyone,

This Departmental Acknowledgement comes too late as it goes to **Gus O’Gorman** who passed away suddenly and all too abruptly recently at the age of 75.

Gus was part of the fabric of this hospital for four decades. He served as Chief of Radiology for a good part of his time here during a period of rapid and substantive technological changes in medical imaging in multiple domains. His subspecialty was neuroradiology so I got to know him well professionally.

Gus began his career here when neuroradiology consisted of skull X-Rays and pneumo-encephalography. For those under 50 years of age, that consisted of injecting air into the subarachnoid space and then turning the child this way and that so that the air would eventually outline the ventricular cavity. This was replaced by computed tomography (incidentally developed by EMI the company that recorded the Beatles) and then the miracle of magnetic resonance (MR). Previously, we would only know what the patient really had on the autopsy table; with MR, we can diagnose accurately, rapidly and without exposure to ionizing radiation.

Gus adapted to all these changes. He more than adapted, he was an expert astute radiologist who always looked at images in the context of what was known clinically. He was not one to give an extensive differential reproduced from a textbook, rather he would put forth the most probable diagnosis with confidence and then give a restricted number of possible alternatives. He was an essential part of the treatment team in the clinical neurosciences, always available to review a challenging case and expedite a request that merited it from a clinical perspective. If truth be told, if a resident told me that Gus had reviewed the images, I would rest easy.

It was said at his funeral service, that Gus had spent his life in medicine and had spent it well. But he was more than a physician. As the priest conducting the service noted, he had never seen the church so full. This was a testament to Gus’ character and how he touched folks he came in contact with. He had a wicked sense of humor and a quick wit. Coupled with a ready smile and chuckle. He was a master mimic of voices and mannerisms with an innate sense of the theatre of which he partook in many productions. His rendition of Kipling’s poem Jabberwocky that would close our annual Preston Robb Neuroscience Dinner is forever lodged in my memory and those who witnessed it over the years.

All who met Gus took away from him his enormous pride in his Irish heritage. It was indelibly woven into his fabric of being. He was incredibly knowledgeable about Irish history, literature, culture, dancing and sports. It was from him that I learned about Ireland’s pint-sized but vibrant Jewish community. He never ceased to point out to me that Joyce’s protagonist in Ulysses was a Jew: Leopold Bloom. His essential Irishness led to him being President of Montreal St Patrick’s Society. The world was shades of Irish green to Gus.

We will all miss Gus, none more so than his wife Karin and his children Aisling and Michael.

Wear a bit of green for him this weekend!

Michael

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