

May 26, 2017

**“Colleagues are a wonderful thing – but mentors, that’s where the real work gets done.”
Junot Diaz**

Hi Everyone

This week’s Departmental Acknowledgement is a most personal one and goes to **Bernard Rosenblatt**; teacher, mentor, colleague, friend and mensch.

It is hard to believe, but Bernie will be taking his retirement from the practice of medicine in the upcoming month of June. Like many of us, Bernie is a McGill lifer-BSc in psychology (where he studied with DO Hebb) MDCM, residencies in medicine (JGH), pediatrics, neurology and fellowship in clinical neurophysiology. His initial staff appointment at the MCH and in the Departments of Pediatrics and Neurology/Neurosurgery lasted his entire professional career.

Bernie played many roles within Pediatric Neurology over the years; Program Director, Division Director, Director of the Clinical Neurophysiology Laboratory (now Neurodiagnostics) and research supervisor. I would estimate that at least 50 child neurologists (including myself) trained under him and many have gone on to distinguished high profile careers. He pioneered evoked potentials at the MCH, as well as the application locally of the most cutting edge intra-operative monitoring techniques for both epilepsy and scoliosis surgery.

If you worked with Bernie you know he is brilliant. I simply do not know anyone with a more encyclopedic up-to-date knowledge of pediatric epilepsy. Indeed, if you were in the Division of Pediatric Neurology, you knew it was Monday morning when you woke up and found in your InBox the latest ‘must-read’ article from the entire spectrum of the field sent by Bernie in the early morning hours when all were soundly sleeping; diagnosis, classification, treatment, genetics, localization or imaging.

Bernie was also a great clinician. Much of what I knew about neurology I would hear first from him. He always seemed to be slightly ahead of the curve. He would always be the first among us to try out a new medication on an intractable epileptic or a challenging behavioural disorder.

Bernie was a relentless practical joker. How many of us were freaked out by a remarkably realistic plastic rat appearing without warning in our office or clinic or the famous ‘bloody nail in his finger and help me dig out’ joke? He was also a relentless truth teller and never hesitated to call out hospital pettiness, stupidity or note that the Emperor really had no clothes.

It’s hard to over-estimate Bernie’s impact on me over the years. He was even Annette’s MSc and PhD supervisor in the days before there were rehabilitation sciences post-graduate degrees. A short story illustrates his impact in a touching way for me. As I was leaving my pediatric residency to go into neurology, where I would spend half my time on adult services, he thrust into my hands on my way out the door trembling with fear, his own personal copy of Plum and Posner’s classic “The Diagnosis of Stupor and Coma” telling me to read it and absorb it. And when my daughter Allison told him recently she was going to do a fellowship in critical care, he thrust into her hands as a gift his personal copy of the latest edition.

If anyone has earned the peace and quiet of retirement it is Bernie. No doubt he will enjoy his children and grandchildren scattered around this world, the company of Abby, as well as the music that is such an integral part of his family life. He will however be missed from our community.

Please join me in wishing Bernie a retirement filled only with health, happiness and good things.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

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