December 4, 2020

Hi Everyone.

Departmental Acknowledgements are typically prompted by an accomplishment by a Departmental member meriting recognition and sharing by our community to celebrate the excellence we have amongst us. While there is no shortage of accomplishments to celebrate, sometimes the celebration of the day-in day-out extending over decades excellence gets short shifted.

I would like to correct this in the final 3 DAs of a most eventful year. We will honor two clinicians this week, a leader next week, and a researcher in the final DA of 2020.

Mary Decell is first up. Her Texan twang and colourful turn of phrases is the first indication when you meet her that she is from away. She came north from her home state in 1989 to be among our first cohort of trainees in the sub-specialty of Pediatric Critical Care. She chose to stay at the MCH after a Fellowship at Sick Kids blessing us with her presence and professionalism. She has been an attending in multiple settings including the PICU, the Technology Dependent Unit (a pre-ACU for our younger members), cardiology OPD clinics and for a while now with our Palliative Care group (PACT). All of these patient populations share core features of biopsychosocial complexity that demand from a health professional intelligence, clinical acumen, sensitivity, tact, calm and dedication. Mary has managed resolutely these challenging situations consistently focusing on delivering the best care she can. She does so by always focusing on the needs of the child and family. She does so by bringing herself and her “A” game to every clinical encounter she finds herself in.

Beyond her adroit physicianship, Mary has a long record of dedication to the hospital community. She always steps up when asked. She has served on, and indeed led such important Committees as the Council for Physicians, Dentists and Pharmacists (CPDP), Clinical Ethics, and the Medical Dental Pharmaceutical Evaluation Committee (MDPEC). This latter Committee serves an important function of Quality Improvement and patient safety by reviewing adverse events and outcomes with the goal not of assigning blame, but rather identifying system flaws and improving future processes to minimize or eliminate re-occurrence.

Please join me in thanking Mary for her dedication.

The second DA for this week goes to Catherine Millar.

Catherine did her pediatric and critical care training here at the MCH and McGill. She returned from a stint in Sherbrooke in 1997 and has remained at McGill ever since. Catherine has been a clinical “Everywoman” providing care in multiple different settings including the PICU, the wards, the Emergency Department, the former Short Stay Unit, Residency Continuity Clinic, Palliative Care, and Complex Care. Her focus now is as a ward attending/hospitalist and in complex care. In all these settings she has practiced with the highest levels of professionalism and physicianship, weaving teaching excellence and role modelling for our trainees. For Catherine there is a seamless, indeed invisible
line, between providing care and learner education. Not surprisingly she has an extensive track record of excellence in both UGME and PGME combined with service on various educationally focused Committees including the Residency Program Committee in Pediatrics and a recent stint as an Osler Fellow. A constant theme in her practice has been dedication, compassion, empathy, intelligence, integrity and curiosity.

Catherine is now in her third year of being our Departmental Grand Rounds Co-ordinator. Initially somewhat reluctant to take on this role due to her shy nature, she really has handled the many organizational details of this task with her usual aplomb. Grand Rounds is an under-appreciated CPD activity that serves the corollary function of providing an opportunity for a disparate Department to gather together weekly and share an informative activity. At no time is this sharing of time and space (yes, I know it is virtual at this moment in history) more important than currently. With little warning and no prior precedent, Catherine pivoted Grand Rounds to a virtual format and has superlatively managed the new dynamics of Zoom based chat, questions and interactions. She has done so with the superb technical support of John Batt from our AEC. The response has been most positive, and I am pleased to say that attendance has more than doubled, which make the effort all the more worthwhile.

Please join me in thanking Catherine for her example of clinical excellence over the years and for her revitalization, under duress, of our Grand Rounds.

Have a great weekend everyone! As Hannukah begins next Thursday evening, Happy Hannukah and may the light of freedom brighten all lives.

Michael

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