

In Memoriam: Robert J. Arceci

Bob Arceci's breadth and depth as a physician scientist transcended the norm of physician scientists whose lives are celebrated for a singular achievement or a body of work. Those of us who collaborated with Bob in any of his myriad areas of achievement are all aware of his considered thought and immensely helpful advice. Jim Palis reminds us that as early as 1974, then M.D./Ph.D. graduate student Bob had the "...ability to bridge disparate areas of knowledge in a thoughtful, erudite, and enthusiastic manner, with a gentle smile and twinkle in his eyes." Bob almost never told you what to do but rather insisted that you think about your own thinking, gather the data, and come to a well-reasoned course of action. Greg Reaman remembers him as "... generous in sharing his knowledge especially when it was directed to improve the chances of success for another." Clearly Bob exemplified the "Habits of Mind" described by Costa and Kallick; [1] the skills required to come to intelligent answers to questions, the answers to which are not known to you or many times to anyone.

Bob leaves a vast circle of colleagues and friends who now have to ask themselves, "What would Bob say?" rather than find him, with remarkable ease, anywhere in the world. We have called him at, unbeknownst to us, ungodly hours in whatever time zone he occupied, to find an energetic and enthusiastic colleague happy to help solve a problem. We will miss that sly twinkle in his eye – a twinkle you could even hear over the phone – when he knew he nailed it! Giorgio Perilongo, the President of SIOP, described Bob's smile as, "... a sign of his contagious positive attitude towards life, which is what of him, I want most to bring with me." Perhaps most importantly, Bob was the kindest man we have ever met. Even those who received rejection letters from Bob on behalf of *Pediatric Blood & Cancer* perceived that he shared their disappointment and was there to help if needed.

Bob worked tirelessly as an Editor. François Doz of *L'Institute Curie* describes him as working to "... kindly improve the English of investigators from all over the world," so that *PB&C* could take its place publishing the best clinical and laboratory science from anywhere. As Bob himself wrote in his inaugural editorial, "Next to being part of discovery itself and sharing one's own science with colleagues, nurturing and publishing the best of other people's work comes as a very close second area of personal satisfaction." [2]

We all marveled at Bob's extraordinary capacity for productive work. Ben Franklin said that if you want something done ask a busy person.... So we all asked Bob. So now a small army is busy assembled to fill the gaps his premature death has created: *Pediatric Blood & Cancer* responsibilities, scientific and clinical leadership, guidance of scientific and philanthropic boards, and journal and grant review to mention only a few. As Brian Druker said, regarding his responsibility to carry forward a collaboration, "... we will work together ... as Bob would have wanted and expected of us." Gabrielle Calaminus, a past SIOP President sums it up, "The SIOP

community has lost one of her charismatic figures and greatest supporter and we all will painfully miss him"

Bob's closest friends and colleagues – who number in the hundreds, all over the world – have reached out to each other to offer condolences. We now know that among our greatest accomplishments was simply to know him. The repeated refrain, "Thank you for introducing me to Bob," from young and old colleagues, clinicians, scientists, patients, and parents speaks eloquently the measure of the man. And of course our loss pales in comparison to that of Bob's wife, sons, and extended family. We thank them for unselfishly sharing this remarkable man.

In memory of Bob's dedication to our field, and inspired by his own wishes, the Saint Baldrick's Foundation (of which Bob was a Board member and head of the Scientific Advisory Board) has established – in concert with ASPHO, SIOP and COG – a yearly award in his name. This award will provide three years of substantial discretionary funding each year for two young investigators, one American and one International, to enable them to pursue highly innovative cancer research. This living memorial will carry forward Bob's vision of inventive, clinically relevant research and help train future leaders to fill a few of his many shoes. Joanne Hilden, president of ASPHO, describes how all of us feel: "honoring Bob is a privilege and indeed we all ... feel Bob smiling."

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