



IN MEMORIAM

Donald M. Palatucci, M.D.
Professor of Neurology
San Francisco
1940 — 2002

Donald M. Palatucci, M.D., born in New York City on August 26, 1940, died peacefully in the early morning of November 8, 2002 after a long battle with colon cancer. He will be remembered with respect and affection as a vibrant, inspirational human being and a superb clinician staunchly dedicated to the welfare of his family and his patients, who, in a very real sense, form part of his extended family.

After receiving his B.A. degree with honors from Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA, in 1962 and his M.D. from Columbia University in New York City in 1966, and following military service as a U.S. Naval Hospital staff neurologist in San Diego and then in Oakland in 1970-1972, Dr. Palatucci practiced neurology in San Francisco for the next 30 years while earning numerous awards for his outstanding teaching at the UCSF School of Medicine, rising at last to the rank of full professor. Not content with these accomplishments, he was the prime mover in the organization of all neurologists in our state into the Association of California Neurologists (ACN), as its founder and first president in 1999. He was justifiably proud of his work in this capacity, and in his concomitant work with patient- advocacy groups at the state level as well. These fundamental, yet arduous accomplishments led to a model which he developed on a national level with the assistance of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN). There is little, if any, doubt, after his leadership role in the state organization he was so instrumental in founding, and after his work as a member of the AAN Board of Directors, shortly before his final illness took hold, that he would have been a quintessential representative of San Francisco, UCSF and our specialty of neurology as a strong candidate for the presidency of our national organization.

Don Palatucci's personal and professional style incorporated storytelling with humor, both in his instruction as a clinician and teacher as well as in his guidance as a colleague, administrator and devoted family man. These might be considered rare gifts in a man of such keen intellect. He had a gift for relating in a unique way to each individual he came in contact with in whatever capacity, and for expressing his thoughts and feelings concisely, trenchantly and eloquently. He would have been as outstanding a leader in law, politics or public service in general as he in fact was in his chosen profession of medicine. He learned his communication skills from a father who was a distinguished professor of endocrinology at Yeshiva University in New York City, and from a maternal grandfather who was one of "New York's finest" with his own public- information radio program in addition to his regular "beat" as a police officer. In grateful remembrance for his 30 years of professional service, Don was declared by his colleagues in the UCSF Association of Clinical Faculty to have "held the glue between town and gown in a seemingly effortless model. He held equal respect from the community [as well as from the] academic world."

Don is survived by his loving and devoted wife, Blandid, and his three children, Susanna, Nicholas, and Marc. He was fluent in Italian, accomplished in German, and a staunch devotee of opera in those languages. A Humanity in Medicine fund at his alma mater, Columbia University, has been established in his name.

We are all deeply saddened by his all- too- premature passing, but very grateful for the privilege of having known, worked with and matched wits with him.

Donald C. Kitt, M.D.