



It is very difficult for me to have to write my first "Letter from The President", with its content focused upon the achievements of my predecessor, Angelo P. Creticos M.D., who recently passed away. He was my friend, practice partner, mentor and confidant. Angelo was the Doctors' Doctor, whose focus was always patient centered. His achievements were as varied as his interests were and he was successful in all of them. I will only focus on those which reflect his over 20 years of service to the Washington Square Health Foundation of which he was a Board member for over 23 years and President for over 15 years. His impact as a Board member, Chairman of the Grant Committee, Vice President and President has shaped the major themes of the Foundation's work.

He was the driving force behind the Foundation's Emergency Room Study on ED Overcrowding, which resulted in changing how many of the Chicagoland ED Departments are structured to insure that only those patients that need ED services get them and those that do not receive appropriate primary care. At the beginning of Washington Square's mission, he pushed for the Foundation to take up, at the time, the unpopular cause of the fight against AIDS. He championed the first "Home Health Care Service for HIV/AIDS" clients in Chicago, as well as the use of nutritionists as part of the medical treatment team in the battle against AIDS. At the time, Chicago was one of the few places that, through a WSHF grant, nutritionists were brought in to the medical team. He also championed the building of the First P3 Containment Laboratory at a private not-for-profit, non-governmental major teaching hospital in Chicago to carry out research on retroviruses, including the HIV virus. Out of his dream for a cure for this disease came the PCR process of identifying the HIV virus, as well as other infections, such as MRSA, through a variant of the PCP technology called FPCR.

Angelo's compassion knew no bounds in terms of patient care. That is why he strongly supported the Foundation's initial and continuing support of hospice and palliative care. The Foundation supported the first hospice at Northwestern, as well as the first home of the Midwest Center for Palliative Care at Evanston Hospital. The support of the Foundation to almost all of the FQHC's in the Chicago area, as well as the free clinics, merely reflected what he believed. People deserve good health care that is patient centered. His support of the surrogate patient training program for second and third year medical students, which today is the standard of medical education, reflected his desire to have doctors learn to be more patient centered. He always said, "listen to the patient". This was one of his best diagnostic tools. He always wanted the Washington Square Health Foundation medical and nursing scholars to be patient centered. The Foundation scholarships focused on primary care.

I remember that Angelo also had a keen sense of the possible when it came to research. He was a driving force for the Board in the development of The Chicago Diabetes Project, a project designed to create a functional cure for diabetes, ideally in five years. Angelo understood the science and I know

that helped the non-medical members of the Board understand why this disease was such a public health problem and how truly amazing Principal Investigator's, Dr. José Oberholzer, research was in relation to finding a cure for this disease, using a truly international, multi-institutional, collaborative approach unheard of in today's' competitive grant driven research environment.

Finally, he was always careful not to even present the slightest perception of favoritism in the Foundation's grant making. Integrity was a key to his life and he made it part of this Foundation. When approached by friends, even family members, he always followed the Foundation's policy of referring these contacts to the staff. He never interfered with the staff and he always excused himself from any discussion or vote which even had the slightest hint of favoritism. I started my letter by saying that he was the medical profession's Doctors' Doctor and I will end it by saying he was the charitable foundations' President's President.

William N. Werner, M.D., M.P.H.  
President, Washington Square Health Foundation