IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT GEORGE LEONARD

Over the decade of the 1970's, there occurred a professionalizing surge unprecedented in the history of pharmacy. It was wrought from conviction and tenacity by a uniquely competent and determined group of young men and women who were dedicated to the evolution of a rejuvenated profession. Their ranks were diminished on September 6, 1981, by the death of Dr. Robert George Leonard.

Those with whom Bob Leonard shared a vision of pharmacy as a fully professionalized occupation were special people. Because they committed themselves to be instruments for professional renewal as well as advocates of that renewal, they attained unique status among us. The intensity of that commitment long ago generated a fraternal bond and collective identity transcending the individual. That for which Bob Leonard stood is assured perpetuity in the continuing works of his peers. This tribute to him becomes a tribute also to those who will sustain the endeavor.

Emerging neoprofessionalism in pharmacy has acquired the label "clinical pharmacy," a term used by some to substantiate a recognition of the profession's traditional obligations to the patient. To others the term has come to mean a new orientation to education and practice. To Bob Leonard it represented a level of commitment to a specific mode of practice, one in which opportunities existed to overcome obstacles that have limited the optimal use of the pharmacist's expertise. Recognizing the unrealized potential for an amalgamation of pharmaceutical and biomedical sciences that could be developed into a unique composite of patient-management concepts, he viewed clinical pharmacy also as a vehicle for innovation. Undeterred by the ambiguity of the term as

defined philosophically, Bob Leonard and his peers, through their works, have given us a functional definition of clinical pharmacy.

The profession is indebted to these clinical practitioners whose determination and dynamic, creative practices have altered forever the stereotyped image of the pharmacist. Historical proscriptions are diminishing as the boundaries of professional prerogative expand. No central authority has decreed that it be thus. In their daily encounters with patients and with other health professionals, clinical pharmacists have demonstrated their ability to add new dimensions of applied science to drug therapy. In so doing they have established themselves and the profession as essential principals in the provision of quality patient care.

Undoubtedly, his professional education and training were important factors in Bob Leonard's development as a clinican. He received a baccalaureate degree from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy; the University of Kentucky provided his doctoral education and residency training. But his ability to perform beyond his level of formal training differentiated his growth as a practitioner. This quality is evident among his peers. Some of the educational programs of pioneering clinical pharmacists provided minimum clinical training, and none offered intensive research experience. Yet there exists today a body of literature convincingly documenting the success in clinical practice and scientific investigation of these early leaders. Can there be any question of their adherence to Emerson's philosophy that "difficulties exist to be surmounted"?

Coexisting with the pain of Bob's loss is the joy of observing the consequences of his influence and preceptorship among those developing clinicians he has trained, young people who, like Bob, will grow beyond the limitations of their training and thus expand the profession's horizons into another generation of practitioners. Excellence begets excellence, it is true, but dedication to excellence is extrapolated geometrically through successive ranks of the highly motivated, a splendid legacy indeed!

The complex of teaching, research, clinical-practice, and administrative duties that consumed a great proportion of Bob Leonard's time did not deter him from a generous support of professional organizations at the local, state, and national levels. His unique leadership traits will be missed, along with the sense of purpose he projected and the comradeship we shared.

Bob Leonard was devoted to his family with an intensity that characterized his commitment to his profession. He and his wife, Sheryle, were great friends, happy people who recognized and rejoiced in their special relationship. Despite his many commitments, Bob reserved an inviolable share of his giving for his family. He shared with his sons, Keith and Wesley, school activities and Indian Guides experiences; he coached their soccer and Little League teams; he taught them responsibility and showed them the meaning of love. Bob Leonard was a great teacher from whose example we all learned, grew, and gained faith in ourselves, in each other, and in the profession.

William H. Cunningham, President
The University of Texas at Austin

H. Paul Kelley, Secretary
The General Faculty

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