



Abe E. Berman, MD

In Memorium

1911–2003



Abe Berman, a Past President of our Medical Society, died at the age of 91 on January 20, 2003. He was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota on September 17, 1911.

He earned his MD and completed his residency in Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota. Upon graduation, he was called into the Army Medical Corps where he served in the European Theater for four years.

In 1940 he established his pediatric practice in Sacramento. He continued in that office for 30 years, sharing the practice for some of those years with James Bramham, MD. When he left pediatrics, he became a physician in the Student Health Center at UC Davis for 10 years.

Abe had a brilliant mind. He took life seriously and was driven to excel in all that he did.

In addition to being President in 1954, Abe served on the Board of Directors of the Medical Society, then referred to as the Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement, and was active on many committees including the Study Committee for Prepaid Health Plans, the Indigent Care Committee, the Judicial Committee and the Medical Economics Committee.

For a number of years, he served as a Delegate to the California Medical Association and was a positive force in the Sacramento Delegation. Ralph Teal, MD, remembers how Abe tried over and over to get the CMA interested in his pet project that he called "Marketing Methods for Medicine."

Abe's presentations were so detailed and thorough that the average Delegate couldn't follow him. In spite of Ralph's help politically, this idea, perhaps ahead of its time, never caught on.

As a philosopher and deep thinker, Abe liked to discuss and ponder ethical issues. Walt Brainerd, MD, said that he was particularly interested in individual moral values as they affected community ethics. Walt also remembers Abe's creative hobbies. Along with Walt, he shared an interest in the cultivation of bonsai plants. He also wrote poetry and even completed a children's book. With very basic tools, his garage became a woodworking shop where he created furniture. On his lathe, he turned out many beautiful wooden bowls that were given to family and friends.

John Babich, MD, remembers a story about Abe's interest in golf, which he took up late in life after retirement. At one time, he converted his back yard into a giant putting green. He even bought a special lawn mower to cut the grass professionally. When one of his two daughters was married, the Bermans held the wedding reception in their back yard. John says that during the party, the smooth putting green was "aerated" and ruined by the long spiked heels of some of the women who attended the reception.

We shall remember Abe as a friend, philosopher, a thinker, and a kind, caring physician. For the latter quality, he was given the Society's most prestigious recognition, the Golden Stethoscope Award in 1975.

In addition to his daughters and their families, he is survived by his wife, Pearl, to whom he had been married for 66 years. Abe had a long and fruitful life. Unfortunately, he was plagued by bouts of depression that became more troublesome as he aged. In spite of this, he was a prominent member of our medical community who contributed ideas and leadership to all of us. His influence and friendship will be missed.

— Byron H. Demorest, MD

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