



## IN MEMORIAM

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### Harvey Rose, MD, 1932-2008

HARVEY ROSE died on January 1, 2008. It is hard to quantify the magnitude of the impact he had on the practice of medicine, and particularly, the practice of pain medicine.

I first met Dr. Rose in the late 1980s. I had recently left the University of California, Davis, and ventured into the realm of private practice as a hospital-based anesthesiologist and then into the new and developing world of pain medicine.

I was approached by Bill Sandberg and asked to contribute to an article called "The Painful Dilemma" which was spearheaded by the Medical Society under the prodding of Harvey Rose.

He had the insight and foresight to recognize that physicians needed organized medicine to advance medical care and that one physician alone could not do it without help from others. He was the driving light behind this sentinel work, which is still one of the most copied works from our Medical Society in its entire history.

I began to see Harvey at every dinner or event where pain or its treatment was discussed. He never shied away from controversy no matter who the presenter was, be it the Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement, the Medical Board of California, or any federal, state, or enforcement agency. He had been thrown overboard of peer review and under siege from the Medical Board before and he feared not. Harvey was committed to his patients, not afraid to take personal risk in this pursuit, and was a physician warrior in his quest to change our approach to suffering patients. He did this and more.

I had heard stories, almost mythical, of his approach to a legislative solution to the treatment of pain. He convinced Senator Leroy Greene to sponsor legislation which became the Intractable Pain Act for the State of California. Not only did the Sacramento-El Dorado Medical Society, as it was then named, get behind this but so did the California Medical Association.

By his drive and fortitude, this county medical society and this state medical society lived up to their stated mission of serving our patients by practicing the art and science of medicine. The impact of this act was to assure countless patients over many years of needed relief by allowing some physicians who were interested in this type of practice the necessary protection from enforcement to do so.

Over the years, I saw Harvey at the CMA Houses of Delegates, pushing for resolutions, providing insight to the rest of us about pain medicine, and constantly being present to advocate for his patients. He thought nothing of calling local radio or press and discussing his views. He recently was on KFBK on the Tom Sullivan Show, discussing pain management. This was at a time when he was suffering from advancing cancer and receiving chemotherapy.

Harvey had plenty of time to arrange for care of his practice since he knew about his diagnosis and prognosis many months ago. This absolutely did not stop him from

advocating and practicing.

I was called by Harvey, when he was in the hospital and so dyspneic that he could barely talk. He called me to make sure that I followed up on a Bay Area referral for one of his patients. Not a word about his condition or his near death, only about his patients. I had to go to the hospital myself to visit Harvey to find out anything about his declining condition.

That was Harvey, selfless. He embodied the very qualities of being a physician that we all strive to reach but rarely achieve. Near the last days of his life he longed to have the control over his end that he had lost as a consequence of his disease.

Harvey believed that patients should be able to decide, when adequately informed, how to conduct their life, medical care, and end of life care. He knew that most patients who opted for physician-assisted suicide were undertreated pain patients.

Bill Clinton's campaign guide for President was, "It's the economy, stupid." Harvey Rose changed that to define the real issue in his own campaign, and it became his favorite slogan: "It's the pain, stupid."

It was by his constant vocal and passionate advocacy that many of us are able to treat patients today. We are peer reviewed, denied, threatened, dropped from provider panels, and essentially marginalized. We are accused of practicing medicine that is not evidence-based by its current insurer-friendly definition.

Harvey Rose lived through all of this, through the managed care onslaught, at risk medical care, capitation, HMO panels, and all of it. He did not complain about it. He just soldiered on and took care of his patients.

Never stop, never give up. He taught me the importance of listening to patients and individualizing care for each patient because no two patients are alike. The best medical care for a patient resulted from the special interaction between physician and patient that we hold sacred. Harvey did not let anyone or anything intimidate him or direct him away from his primary directive, patient care.

For these reasons and many more, Harvey Rose is the Father of Pain Medicine in our community, our state, and our nation. I can only hope that we can strive to be as dedicated as Dr. Rose. God rest his soul. Let his life be an example for us all.

— *Lee T. Snook, Jr, MD*

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