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IN MEMORIAM



J. Garland Stroup MD, 1929-2008

SPRING SEEMS TO BE A FITTING TIME to remember Dr. Joseph Garland Stroup, who passed away on September 12, 2008 at the age of 78. He had seen and treated many allergy patients over his 45-year career beginning back in 1962 and spring had always been his busiest time of the year. I had known and worked for him for the past 14 years. He offered me my first job after the military when I came back to Sacramento to practice medicine as a civilian.

We both shared a military background. He had been a West Point Academy physician early in his career and would share stories of his Army life while stationed there. Although he tended to be a free thinker and independent person, he admired the structure and discipline of the military life. He was the Academy's staff pediatrician and took care of the families of soldiers stationed there.

He was trained at UC San Francisco at one of the few certified allergy training programs at that time, under Dr. Albert Rowe. Like most of the Allergy textbooks at the time, Garland was skilled at observational medicine. Most research now is largely dependent on evidence-based medicine but observational medicine often gives us the impetus and postulates for doing the research in the first place and is sometimes underappreciated.

He correlated what he saw and heard from the patient, with what he knew about the practice of medicine. He was a great listener of patients and took detailed notes from his observations much like a medical detective. He especially took interest in what people did for a living or their personal interests because it often impacted what he said to motivate or improve compliance from the patient.

He taught me to always listen to patients and listen to them well for the details of their disease because sometimes the history is the most telling part of their diagnosis. He was very astute at identifying most pollinating trees and paid particularly close attention to identifying hidden food allergens.

He enjoyed seeing and following patients over time and often took care of several generations from the same family. He took great interest in all aspects of their lives, from their home lives to their academic accomplishments. He even made house calls when needed.

Many Hispanic patients particularly liked him because he had a great command of the Spanish language. It was the language he learned as a child, when his father was stationed in Puerto Rico.

Many times he offered free or low cost medical care to those who could not afford it, and tried not to turn away any patients that were truly in need. He was an especially generous man in that way. He was a strong believer that a satisfied patient was his greatest accomplishment and ally.

Even though he was a soft spoken and modest man, he was a great innovator and often ahead of his time in many areas. He had a great entrepreneurial spirit and "can't" he took as a great personal challenge. He loved travel, history, food, wine and music (especially opera) and generously shared these things with those around him.

I, as well as many others, will miss him and think of him often when confronted by difficult situations. His words of advice and calming voice will often come back to me during those times.

- *Allan R. Au, MD*