

Prof. Dimitrios G. Oreopoulos (Alexandroupolis 1936 – Toronto 2012)

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Prof. Dimitrios Oreopoulos M.D. (Athens), Ph.D. (Belfast), FRCPC, FACP, FRCP (Glasgow). passed away peacefully on April 25, 2012 at Etobicoke General Hospital, Toronto, after a courageous battle with cancer. He left us to join his God, whom he loved deeply and served all his life.

He was born on May 24, 1936 in Alexandroupolis, Greece, and his predecessors originated from Asia Minor, from Nyssa, today Nevsehir of Kappadokia. He was one of the five sons of father George and mother Antigoni whose wish was "My sons, help people as much as you can, even at a personal cost." Dimitrios followed this wish with a religious respect all his life. He is survived by his wife Nancy (nee Hooker), and father of George, Philip, Antigone, and John. He is a loving grandfather to Dimitrios, Constantine, Lukas and Nicole. Dr. Oreopoulos graduated from the School of Medicine, University of Athens, in 1960, and he became a qualified specialist in Internal Medicine in 1964. He worked in the Department of Medicine, Hippokration Hospital (1960-66). He held the post of Senior Registrar in the Department of Medicine, Queen's University of Belfast (1966-69). He was Assistant Professor, Associate Professor (1969-79), and since 1979 Professor of Medicine in the Department

of Medicine at the University of Toronto. He worked at the Toronto Western Hospital, (University Health Network) since 1969.

During his creative life he received several Honorary Degrees from Glasgow, Poland and Greece, and numerous awards, including the Gardiner Award, Metro Toronto Citizen of the Year (1989), Distinguished Physician of the Year, Hellenic Medical School, New York (1993), the National Torchbearer Award, American Kidney Fund (1994), Member of the Order of Honour, Republic of Greece (1998), the Belding Scribner Award, American Society of Nephrology (1998), the New Pioneers Award (Science & Technology) (2005), the Gabor Zellerman Award in Peritoneal Dialysis (2005). He was also a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Athens, Greece. In 2005 the Uni-

versity of Toronto, in recognition of his long-term and multiple achievements in clinical research, established the Oreopoulos-Baxter Chair which is devoted in research in Nephrology.

Dr. Oreopoulos as a nephrologist devoted his career to improving the lives of patients with kidney disease through the development of innovative treatments. He was the founder and director of



the Peritoneal Dialysis Program, Toronto Western Hospital (1970-2002), and over many years his department was the metropolis of Peritoneal Dialysis attracting and educating over 100 nephrologists from all over the world. He was also deeply moved by the suffering of aged patients and was the Founder and First President of the International Society of Geriatric Nephrology and Urology (1994-1998) and Chair of the American Society of Nephrology Advisory Group on Geriatric Nephrology (2009). He was extremely prolific in publishing original articles and chapters in several books, including the Introduction to Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (1980), Peritoneal Dialysis (1981), Geriatric Nephrology (1985), The Essentials of Peritoneal Dialysis (1993), Nephrology and Urology in the Aged Patient (1993), Nephrology and Geriatrics Integrated (2000), The Aging Kidney in Health and Disease (2008). He was the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Humane Health Healthcare International which was devoted to studying and writing about the ethical care of patients. He was also the Editor-in-Chief of International Urology and Nephrology Journal (incorporating Geriatric Nephrology and Urology Journal) (2007-present), and Associate Editor of Advances in Peritoneal Dialysis (1986-present).

His humanitarian endeavours were carried out throughout his life with modesty and great humility, faith in God and a strong belief in the intrinsic worth of all human beings. He was the driving force to motivate the Greek community in Toronto in his capacity as a former President of the Hellenic Home for the Aged (1987-1995), Greek Orthodox Education in Ontario (1996-2001) and Athens Villa (1997-2004). He lived an ascetic life working extremely hard, sleeping few hours and avoiding unnecessary pleasures and extravagances. All his life had a great respect and gratitude for his teachers and mentors Prof. I. Giatzidis, Prof. M. McGeown and Prof. A. Rapoport, and he tried to convey this to all his colleagues and students. In his lecture as an Honorary Professor of the Medical School of the Aristotelean University, Thessaloniki he said: "...when I help some of my colleagues my expectation is that he will do the same to other younger ones. We must embrace teaching

and we should share our expertise and knowledge with younger colleagues. I believe that this is a part of our voyage in life."

He was a mentor himself and a great teacher. In his teaching he blended his astute clinical experience and wide-range knowledge with respect for academic values and altruistic compassion. He believed that we are all a part of the same big whole, and he tried to communicate this constantly to his friends throughout the world until the last month of his life. He was an intellectual in a constant search of his God "...where and how I shall meet him."

His autobiography *From starvation in Greece to... Peritoneal Dialysis in Canada: What an exciting and blessed life* was completed in 2009 [www.oreopoulosdg.ca]. There, he recalls at the end: "...I am satisfied with what I have achieved with the talents that God has given me. I do not know how long God will keep me in this planet, and it is the knowledge that someday I shall go that makes me to value my work and my life better, and enhance my desire to know my God. Until then I hope to be freer than I am now, and fear less the unknown." Three years later his wish was fulfilled. He departed very well prepared, free and without fear; he left to meet his God whom he loved so dearly.

■ Further reflection from the Editor-in-Chief.

At this moment, when in our Journal we are remembering Professor Oreopoulos's international scientific dimension and his great humanitarianism, we should take a second to recall what a friend of Portugal he was. He was, in fact, the main supporter in favour of the congress of the International Society for Geriatric Nephrology and Urology being held in 2001, in Lisbon, under my presidency. He was an active participant in this congress's scientific programme, and in addition to his work, he also enjoyed his stay in our city and his work with Portuguese nephrology.

Furthermore, he was a great friend of mine, one who will be missed.