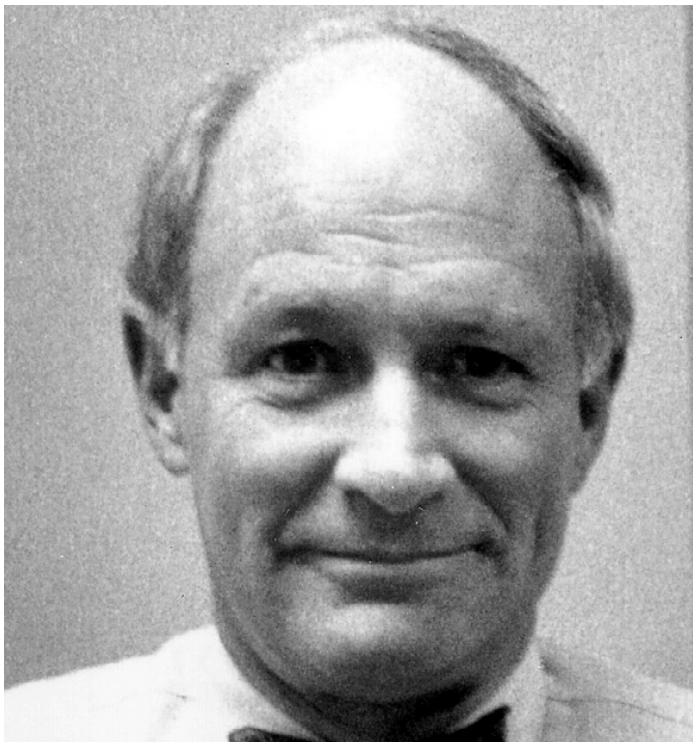
THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE
Harvard University

William Douglas Kaplan



"And gladly would he lerne and gladly teche."

No one was more glad to teach than Bill Kaplan. In this he was indiscriminate, educating students, residents, colleagues, technologists and patients with equal clarity and enthusiasm. When he died after a 9-month struggle with colon cancer, he was, by title, chief of oncologic nuclear medicine at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and professor of radiology at Harvard Medical School. An effective pedagogue and master diagnostician, he was, by inclination, a warm human being, respectful of patients, colleagues and coworkers.

Bill began his medical career in 1969, graduating from the University of Maryland School of Medicine at the age of 32. After an internship and one-year of diagnostic radiology residency at Washington Hospital Center in the District of Columbia, he joined the first residency class of the Joint Program in Nuclear Medicine at Harvard Medical School. In his notes from that first year, the program director wrote of Bill, "a serious clinical scholar, particularly good in working with patients and technologists, brings a much needed esprit to the program." That assessment held true throughout his career. After his residency, he stayed on with the Joint Program at the Beth Israel, Children's and Brigham Hospitals.

Bill had come to medicine after six years in communications, first in television news broadcasting and then representing the People-to-People University Programs of the Hallmark Foundation in Kansas City, Missouri. This experience prepared him well for his first major faculty assignment, organizing a continuing medical education course in clinical nuclear medicine. This job was perfect for him: bringing together his work in television, his broad knowledge of clinical medicine, and his growing talent as a teacher. A good listener, he seemed to know precisely what practicing specialists needed and wanted. Within a few years, the Kaplan-Harvard CME course became highly regarded and continues to this day. During the last months of his life, Bill carefully planned his eighteenth annual offering with characteristic humor, attention to detail, and sensitivity to the participants' needs.

In tribute to their dedicated efforts to science and medicine, deceased members of the Harvard Faculty of Medicine (those at the rank of full or emeritus professor) receive a review of their life and contributions with a complete reflection, ***a Memorial Minute****.*

As his research interests grew, Bill focused on the potential application of nuclear medicine to cancer staging and treatment planning. In 1976, this interest was codified in a review he wrote entitled, "*The Radionuclide Identification of Tumors*." The paper, published in the journal Cancer, comprehensively described the state of the field and prospects for the future. It was a prelude to what was to become the central focus of his professional life, oncologic nuclear medicine.

In addition to such broad contributions to the nuclear medicine literature, Bill was best known for his efforts in four areas: perfusion studies to assess intraarterial chemotherapy, lymphoscintigraphy, radiogallium imaging in lymphoma, and brain tumor imaging. He and his collaborators provided the seminal investigations defining the utility of radionuclide perfusion studies for assessing the watershed distribution of intraarterial chemotherapy infusions to the liver. Prior to his work, contrast angiography had been used for this purpose but at substantially different flow rates than used for the actual chemotherapy infusions. Bill's work established the radionuclide technique as the standard procedure and in essence changed the entire practice pattern for this critical evaluation. He then extended the concept to demonstrate that perfusion patterns can predict patient response by differentiating well perfused from poorly perfused areas of tumor.

His later work with radiogallium imaging also changed clinical practice. He demonstrated clearly that high dose gallium imaging was superior to conventional gallium imaging through increased count density and, therefore, increased sensitivity in the detection of active disease in patients with Hodgkin's and nonHodgkin's lymphoma. His original publication on the topic redirected thinking about gallium imaging. He then extended the utility of the technique to the assessment of residual tumor viability, an extremely important clinical problem. Bill's work was widely regarded as thorough, meticulous and practical.

In 1977, with his special talents and interest in clinical nuclear medicine, he was asked to organize a nuclear medicine unit at what was then the Sidney Farber Cancer Center. Thus began a 17-year bond between Bill Kaplan and the people who work and are treated at this special institution. He took pride in the appearance of the unit and in ensuring that the technology was state-of-the-art, but his principal concern was people: the care of patients, the training of residents, the supervision and education of technologists, the service to referring physicians, and the daily interchange with colleagues. His patients adored him; he brought them compassion, caring and enormous confidence. Always smiling, soft spoken, and friendly, he dispelled fears, made patients feel that he had all the time in the world for them, and did all this in the most understated, humble fashion. He was without pretense; most of his patients called him Bill.

For six years Bill ran the continuing education courses at the Society of Nuclear Medicine's annual meeting and, afterward, chaired its Committee on Education and Training. He had an abiding interest in the education of technologists and gave considerable time to this effort. He developed a curriculum for instruction in nuclear medicine technology, served as physician representative to the Technologist Section of the Society of Nuclear Medicine and was the Society's representative to the Advisory Council of Nuclear Medical Technology. But the most enduring and invaluable contribution to the education of technologists was Bill's active and personal involvement with students. He served as Medical Director of the Nuclear Medical Technology program at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences, and in that capacity committed his time, energy and considerable talent to foster the continual improvement of the program and provide its students meaningful clinical experiences. In recognition of his unselfish and generous service, the college has instituted an award in his name given

annually to its most outstanding student.

Bill was sought world-wide as a lecturer and had a particular affinity to the Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney, where he led the widely acclaimed "Kaplan seminars." Two days before his death he learned that he had been awarded the Distinguished Educator's Prize of the Society of Nuclear Medicine. The award recognized his "contributions to the medical literature, his activities as an organizer of educational courses on transferring the science of nuclear medicine to the practice of medicine, and his abilities as an outstanding educator of practicing physicians, technologists, scientists, house staff and medical students."

A remarkable clinician and teacher, Bill Kaplan demonstrated that a diagnostic sub-specialist can and should be a compassionate physician and a warm colleague. His family was large and included, in addition to his children Douglas and Ann and other close relatives, an army of patients, technologists, scientists and physicians who could all lay claim to his affection and attention.

Respectfully submitted,

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