



David Hurwitz



David Hurwitz, Clinical Professor of Medicine *Emeritus*, died on February 22, 1992 at the age of 86. From 1950 until 1971, Dr. Hurwitz was Chair of the Department of Medicine at the Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, as well as Chief of the Diabetes Clinic at the Boston City Hospital. He was regarded as a prototype clinician-teacher by several generations of medical students, houseofficers from the Harvard Medical Units at the City, as well as research fellows and faculty. He was a visionary, yet very practical and realistic in his role as an innovator, administrator, educator, and counselor.

Born in Boston's West End, Hurwitz spent his entire life within the environs of the city, save for a year's fellowship in Chicago. He attended English

High School and Harvard College, and graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1929. As a clerk, he became enthralled with the Boston City Hospital when exposed to such luminaries as George Minot, Edwin Locke, Soma Weiss, William Castle, and Maxwell Finland. Upon graduation from medical school, he began his official association with the Boston City Hospital, where he served as a "pup" (intern) on the Second Harvard Medical Service. His attachment to the City and the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory continued until 1974 when the Harvard Unit was dissolved.

In the early 1950s, in the setting of a municipal hospital, Hurwitz designed and directed the first comprehensive clinic for patients with diabetes. That clinic provided total integrated medical care for all individuals with diabetes who received their care at the Boston City Hospital. It became a model for similar municipal and county institutions across the United States that cared for indigent patients with diabetes. In collaboration with Dr. Norbert Freinkel, Dr. Hurwitz secured one of the first NIH training grants in diabetes and metabolism. For a decade and a half that grant was the prime source of support for several dozen investigators who proceeded to head diabetes clinics and investigative laboratories in the U.S. and abroad.

Early in his career, Hurwitz advanced the treatment of pregnant diabetic patients. While at the City, his studies of the original oral hypoglycemic agents were regarded as seminal; the methodologies and approaches he introduced remain as standards in the large multicentered studies that are now employed.

In 1952, in collaboration with Dr. Charles S. Davidson, David Hurwitz created a bond between the Mount Auburn Hospital, a community hospital in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Harvard Medical Services at the Boston City Hospital. This bond provided an invaluable educational opportunity for houseofficers and medical students. He initiated a program whereby residents from the Harvard Medical Units at the City rotated through Mount Auburn and brought the *esprit* and dedication to patient care that were the hallmarks of that Unit. This amalgamated program provided residents and medical students an opportunity to serve patients from diverse economical and social backgrounds, to manage patients with a broader base of pathological problems, and to gain a better understanding of the practical world of medicine. In addition, the collaborative program helped to upgrade the academic standards at Mount Auburn, to attract top-notch clinician-teachers to that staff, and provided the specialized expertise of faculty housed at the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory. By the mid 1960s, this educational model created by Hurwitz and Davidson, which combined the training facilities and faculties of public and community hospitals, was being emulated in many parts of the country for both undergraduate and postgraduate medical training.

David Hurwitz was particularly versed in the medical politics not only in Boston, but Massachusetts as well. Among his patients were some of the leading political and industrial figures of his time, and he developed those relationships in order to improve the medical care of the indigent -- both diabetic and non-diabetic -- and to help bridge the chasm between "town and gown." He was a member of the commission that was responsible for the establishment of the University of Massachusetts Medical School and, though opposed to the location of that School in Worcester, he was a strong proponent of the concept of a medical school for Massachusetts residents.

Without Pearl, his wife for over 60 years, David acknowledged that few, if any, of his professional accomplishments would have been achieved. Sagacious and rational, she was a strong advocate for the mentally retarded and disabled. Through her tireless efforts much of the state legislation was passed that recognized the needs and potential of this population. She was a counselor, mentor, and advisor not only to David but to countless friends, colleagues, and associates. The accomplishments of their children, Michael, Steven, Alfred and Julie, reflect the warm parental guidance and a strong family bond. The enjoyment and gratification that Dave Hurwitz attained from his academic, clinical and administrative achievements were never equal to those he gained from his eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

David and Pearl adored the Cape, especially Falmouth and the beach, which was a short walk from the home to which they retired. To entertain friends, students, residents, and neighbors, to discuss current issues of medical economics, politics, and family, and to reminisce about the advancements in science

during his professional life and potential for the future were what gave Dave the most happiness. His warmth and understanding were so often coupled with an inherent demand for excellence and the highest standards of professionalism. Medicine -- both its scientific base and its practice -- are at a higher level because of his efforts. The many who trained under his tutelage and observed his clinical acumen are better physicians.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald A. Arky, *Chairperson*

Charles J. Hatem

Norman J. Selverstone