



Peter M. Mauch



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We honor the life of Peter M. Mauch, M.D., Professor of Radiation Oncology (Endowed Professorship in Radiation Oncology), who died September 8, 2017.

Peter was born February 14, 1947 in Cincinnati, OH, where he was raised by loving parents alongside brothers, Jonathan and David. His early influential school experience was at the Walnut Hills School, a city-wide entrance exam school that provided an excellent educational experience and encouraged independence and creativity, attributes that served Peter throughout his life. Peter graduated from Oberlin College with a degree in Chemistry in 1969. While at Oberlin, he became interested in wine, and wrote an independent study thesis titled: A Study of Higher Alcohols and Esters in Wine. He went on to complete a graduate program in microbiology at Washington University in St. Louis, graduating there in 1970. Having decided early on to go to medical school, he continued his postgraduate education at St. Louis University Medical School, graduated in 1974, and

subsequently completed residency and fellowship in Radiation Oncology at the Harvard Joint Center for Radiation Therapy.

After residency, Peter joined the faculty of the Department of Radiation Oncology in 1979 (then the Joint Center for Radiation Therapy under the chairmanship of Samuel Hellman), working primarily at the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. He had become interested in Hodgkin's disease during his residency and elected to continue to study the treatment, outcomes and long-term effects of Hodgkin's disease as well as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma throughout his career. Although patients with stage I-III Hodgkin's disease achieved better outcomes with wide-field radiation compared with limited fields, some experienced serious complications and some relapsed. Peter focused his research on identifying factors that predict a higher risk of relapse. He worked to define prognostic factors and develop

treatments that would ensure low rates of recurrence with limited toxicities in stage I-III Hodgkin's disease patients. As an important part of this work, Peter established a database of Hodgkin's disease patients (now more than 2000 individuals) and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma patients treated at the five Longwood Medical Area Harvard teaching hospitals. He identified two groups with higher risk of relapse after radiation therapy: those with a large mediastinal mass and those with stage III disease. These patients had a 50% risk of recurrence compared to 20% for the typical stage I-II patients. Peter advocated for combined chemotherapy and radiation for these patients, which proved effective for them, reducing the risk of relapse to 20%. In the 1980s, attention focused on the late complications of treatment, including cardiac disease and second malignancies, along with chemotherapy-associated sterility, immune suppression and leukemia. Peter's research explored ways to mitigate these late effects by identifying prognostic factors that would allow reduction of initial treatment, refining the technical delivery and developing standard follow-up procedures. The goal was to institute screening and prevention programs to discover complications or recurrence early, and thereby improve survival. Peter emphasized the importance of following patients long-term throughout his career. This was especially important for Hodgkin's lymphoma patients as cure rates are high and patients are young at diagnosis. He instituted many prospective protocols focused on surveillance and prevention via cardiac studies, mammogram or MRI breast screening, and lung screening for second malignancies. Peter was a consummate clinician who was involved in all aspects of his patients' care. He was always available to them, would personally return their calls, and continued to follow them after they completed therapy. For some, that meant he was a part of their lives for 20-30 years.

In his 35 years as an attending physician, Peter trained over 100 residents with the goal of helping them gain technical expertise in radiation planning and treatment, as well as an understanding of the optimal integration of radiation, chemotherapy and surgery in the management of patients. He provided them with bibliographies of key articles and supervised case presentations at morning conferences, while underscoring the need for multidisciplinary management of lymphoma patients. He sponsored several laboratory and clinical projects, and guided his trainees in the presentation and publication of their research. Peter also mentored and advised faculty in Radiation Oncology regarding their academic careers. He was an exceptional mentor with an open-door policy that was genuine and appreciated. He became a full Professor of Radiation Oncology at Harvard Medical School in April 1999 and was awarded an endowed Professorship in Radiation Oncology in January 2012.

Over the course of his career, Peter wrote more than 340 manuscripts and was the lead editor for two text books: *Hodgkin's Disease* and *Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma*, both of which had a second edition published. He was a steering committee member of the International Database of Hodgkin's disease which evolved into an international working conference to discuss surveillance and prevention strategies to reduce the risk of long-term complications for patients treated for Hodgkin's lymphoma. The inaugural meeting held in 2003 on Lake Como in Bellagio, Italy included 17 attendees representing the USA (Dr. Hoppe, Dr. Yahalom), Denmark (Dr. Specht), Canada (Dr. Gospdarowicz), Europe (Dr. Carde), and others. The conference was held again in 2009.

For 20 years Peter also ran a research laboratory that had been established by Dr. Hellman and was supported by NIH funding. The research focused on studying the role of marrow reserve in preserving platelet and red and white blood cell counts in mice and on different treatments that permanently affect marrow reserve. The laboratory existed for a combined 30 years under the stewardship of Dr. Hellman and Dr. Mauch until it closed in 2007.

Peter was a major participant in our national society, the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), where he created and then chaired the Committee on Outcomes Research for six years. He also chaired the Committee for Educational Sessions for six years and was responsible for organizing 55-60 educational sessions for the ASTRO annual meeting. He believed one of his greatest contributions to the organization was in mobilizing subspecialties to give audience interactive sessions. In these sessions, patient cases were presented, the audience was asked to vote on possible management, and then a panel of experts discussed the case and the audience responses. Peter himself presented educational sessions and interactive discussions for difficult cases for 30 years at the annual meeting. As a result of his many years of service to the organization and to the field of radiation oncology in general, Peter was honored as a Fellow of ASTRO (FASTRO) in 2007.

Throughout his life, Peter loved to travel, and he sought out wonderful restaurants serving good wines. He became a wine collector, especially of Bordeaux, and had a temperature-controlled wine cellar. Peter's favorite travel destinations were Paris, France and Venice, Italy, where he enjoyed not only the food and wine, but also the culture, history and art.

Peter met Barbara Rodriguez in October 1990 and they began a relationship a few years later. They moved together to a home in the Back Bay neighborhood of Boston in 1995, and then married in Venice, Italy on October 13, 1999. Their daughter, Natalia, was born on June 5, 2004 followed by son Julián on December 2, 2006. Peter was always a devoted father and spent as much time with his children as he could, sharing the care responsibilities for them when they were infants, and preparing family meals and school lunches throughout their childhood, even while carrying a heavy clinical load coupled with his administrative and academic responsibilities. He also took an active interest in the children's education and Natalia and Julián were raised to be bilingual, something that both Peter and Barbara felt was important.

In 2007, Peter's brother Jon suffered a heart attack, leading Peter to go for a CT angiogram that year that showed low level narrowing. As a result, he made changes to his lifestyle and diet. In March 2011, a follow-up study found no coronary changes but revealed new abnormalities in his spine with sclerotic changes and liver lesions. A biopsy of the liver diagnosed a well-differentiated neuroendocrine carcinoma. No primary was found, and he pursued several treatments. He was able to continue working a full schedule until 2016 and to maximize the time spent with his children.

Peter had not shared his diagnosis with the full faculty in Radiation Oncology until 2013. Excerpts of

that announcement are below.

“A little more than 2 years ago, on a CT angiogram for a routine cardiac follow-up, I was discovered to have multiple sclerotic bone lesions and 8 liver lesions. On a liver biopsy, I was diagnosed with a neuroendocrine carcinoma. I had no symptoms except for some prior weight loss that I ascribed to stress. I have been on various therapies since then to try to slow the growth of the liver lesions. . .

“I first came to the department in 1975, and I would like to continue to practice a few more years. The median survival of my disease from diagnosis is about 4 years so I hope to have [a] reasonable quality of life for at least a couple of more years. I greatly enjoy teaching, patient care, and my colleagues, and I consider it a privilege to be able to work in such a wonderful department. . . . I greatly value the relationships and friends I have in the department and I do not want this to change because some of you might not know what to say to someone, they care for who is ill. It is alright to ask me how I am, but please do it in the way that you would ask anyone in the department. In advance, I appreciate everyone’s support.”

Peter did continue to work for another three years, but found it necessary to discontinue patient care in late 2016. He maintained his administrative and academic responsibilities until the summer of 2017. Peter had few regrets and felt he was able to do and experience a lifetime of wonderful things. He said, “Life can be hard, but helping people, learning new things every day, seeing the world through travel and having an open mind makes everything worthwhile.” In his final days, he was surrounded by family and friends. He spent those days with the ones he loved most, especially Barbara, Natalia and Julián.

Professionally, Peter was a great clinician, academician and colleague. As a father, he was outwardly loving, nurturing and intimately involved in raising his children. All who knew Peter are left with wonderful memories and are appreciative of the opportunity to have known and worked with him. Peter’s tombstone, which he helped design, summarizes his own assessment of his life.

**Teacher Scholar Clinician
Beloved father of
Natalia Soledad & Julián Ysidro**

Respectfully submitted,

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