

**Stephen J. McPhee, M.D.**

**UCSF Faculty Mentoring Program  
Lifetime Achievement in Mentoring Award  
Ceremony Remarks**

**UCSF Faculty-Alumni House  
May 30, 2007**

Thanks.

There are many of you in this room who are more deserving of this award than I—and you and I know who you are. I really think this is undeserved, especially when compared to Steve Hulley's accomplishments in this regard...

But since this is the first time the campus is making such an award (something I think a great idea), I want to reflect on the mentors I was lucky enough to have during my gestation and what they taught me.

As many of you know, I was a medical student, resident, and fellow at Johns Hopkins. There, I was fortunate to have two remarkable mentors in Drs. Victor McKusick and Philip Tumulty.

I met Victor McKusick when I was a medical student—I remember before presenting him a case, we had to look up all the eponyms because we knew Dr. McKusick would ask about them: "...and who was Hirschsprung?" Later, I took care of his patients as a resident and came to see what an insightful man he was. Finally, I spent 6 months working under him as an Assistant Chief of Service, meeting with him daily in his office to discuss "the service." Victor taught me about the science of medicine, about curiosity and passion for understanding, about the "cutting edge" field of genetics, about organizing information and using computers, about informatics and textbooks (both the *Osler Textbook of Medicine* and his own *On Line Mendelian Inheritance in Man*). Victor's passion for the history of medicine taught me that scientific understanding proceeded by "giants standing on the shoulders of giants."

I also met Phil Tumulty as a student through a weekly conference we called "Tum's Rounds," in which he interviewed a patient and then, after excusing the patient, told us about her giant cell arteritis or lupus. Later, I took care of his patients as a resident. Then, I spent 6 months as a general medicine fellow, literally following in his footsteps, rounding on every one of his inpatients, and seeing every one of his outpatients with him. Phil taught me about the art of medicine. He taught me about listening to the patient's story, letting the patient tell her whole story, hearing the story that is in the other. Phil taught me about patients struggling with difficult-to-diagnose, and even-more-difficult-to-treat multi-system illnesses, about "managing" patients who could not be cured. He taught me about the importance of the physician's presence. And he taught me, by his example and advice, about the relevance of one's own spiritual life to this work. One day, he offered me one of the best pieces of advice I've ever received--to:

"Spend some time each day in complete silence."

When I arrived at UCSF, I was blessed to have a terrific mentor here in Dr. Steven Schroeder. Steve was a different kind of mentor for me. His mentoring concerned both academic and personal life survival skills. From Steve, I learned about thriving in clinic and on wards, writing grants, practicing for site visits, preparing and presenting oral abstracts and posters, writing manuscripts, preparing a CV, and making and keeping academic friends with whom to collaborate productively, friends like Drs. Bernie Lo, Hal Luft, Barbara Gerbert, Eliseo Perez-Stable, and Maxine Papadakis.

Steve also taught me about the importance of getting out of here to spend time with my family—how not to miss my kids' games. When my kids were little, Steve once told me, "Travel as little as you need to, though perhaps not a much as you want to!"

I am also grateful to my many mentees here—just as my best students challenged me into being a better teacher, the same can be said for those I've been privileged to work closely with, whether they were:

special medical students like Shawn Becker, Craig Pollock or Seth Holmes;

terrific residents like Drs. Andy Bindman, Jack Colford, Judy Walsh, Allen Gifford, Mike Pignone, Molly Conroy, Michael Steinman, Heather Cousins, or B.J. Miller;

wonderful fellows like Drs. Bill Detmer, Albert Wu or Mike Rabow;

enthusiastic junior faculty like Drs. Steve Pantilat, Judy Walsh, Tung Nguyen, or Mike Potter;

or Tung's and my fabulous research staff at the Vietnamese Community Health Promotion Project (now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year) like Chris Jenkins, Joyce Bird, Ching Wong, Thoa Nguyen, Hy Lam, Gem Le, and Drs. Ky Lai, Khanh Le, and Janice Tsoh.

Earlier this month, I attended our medical school's graduation where I heard our students recite (in 22 different native tongues!), the Oath of Louis Lasagna; it reads in part:

"I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians  
In whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine  
With those who are to follow..."

Hearing them reminded me that when I graduated from Hopkins all those many decades ago, I took the Hippocratic Oath, which reads in part:

"I swear... To consider dear to me as my parents him who taught me this art; to live in common with him and if necessary to share my goods with him;  
To look upon his children as my own brothers, to teach them this art..."

Both versions remind me how lucky I am--we are--to be in this profession, to do this good work.