

In Memoriam

Professional Tribute: Jay Neufeld

On September 29th, 2017, the field of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine lost a superb physician, professional, and overall outstanding human being, Jacob Alan Neufeld, aka “Dr. J.”. Dr. Neufeld began his professional career with a Bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. He continued his studies by obtaining an MPH from the University of North Carolina prior to receiving his Medical Doctorate from Wake Forest University. He completed his training in 1988 in Pediatrics and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (combined program) at The Children’s Hospital of Michigan and the Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan, Wayne State University. His first faculty appointment was at New York University and The Rusk Institute as a clinical assistant professor in Pediatrics and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. In 2002, Dr. Neufeld joined the faculty at the Medical College of Virginia/Virginia Commonwealth University and served as Chief of the Division of Pediatric Rehabilitation. He was elected President of the medical staff of Children’s Hospital, Richmond, Virginia in 2005. His heart called him west in early 2007 to accept the position of Medical Director of the Department of Pediatric Rehabilitation at Children’s Hospital and Research Center, Oakland, CA. From Oakland he went to Boise, Idaho as the Medical Director of Pediatric Rehabilitation at St. Luke’s Hospital and Children’s Specialty Center.

Throughout his career, Dr. Neufeld continued to show unsurpassed passion and dedication to the field of Pediatric Rehabilitation. It was his vision and idea – along with our late colleague Linda Michaud, MD – to create the Gabriella E. Molnar Research and Education Fund through the Foundation for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. This fund is now awarding its 6th annual grant (2017), in the pursuit of excellence in research to improve the lives of children with disabilities and their families. Dr. Neufeld’s contributions to

research to advance the field included numerous publications, posters and conference presentations, both nationally and internationally. Areas of study included spina bifida, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome and other disabling conditions. Dr. Neufeld was instrumental in securing many grants and served as principal investigator on a number of these projects. He was involved in the current National Spina Bifida Registry, working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Other grant projects included secondary conditions and adaptations of spina bifida; leadership and excellence in neuromuscular disabilities and bio-terrorism training. Dr. Neufeld was also a dedicated educator. He served as the program director of the combined Pediatrics/PM&R residency program at VCU and was the representative to the Residency Review Committee for a number of years. He trained numerous residents across the country in the art of pediatric rehabilitation medicine.

Perhaps his biggest professional gift to the field was the creation of the *Journal of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine* to which he dedicated endless time, energy and effort, guiding it as Editor-in-Chief. What foresight and fortitude he exhibited when he sought a publisher and assembled an incredible editorial board with expertise spanning the disciplines of care for children with disabilities! When the first issue of this journal was released in 2008, Dr. Neufeld proudly handed out copies at all our national meetings, continuing to do so at our last meeting in Montreal (AACPD, September 2017). How amazing that we all have a journal dedicated to research in the rehabilitation care of children with disabilities, all to the credit of Dr. Neufeld. The Journal is now in its 10th volume, indexed on PubMed, with numerous special issues published on valuable research topics that help advance the clinical care we provide.

Dr. Neufeld was a visionary for our field. While the depth of loss cannot be measured, his legacy of dedica-

tion, action and advocacy for the good of children with disabilities and their families will never be forgotten.

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